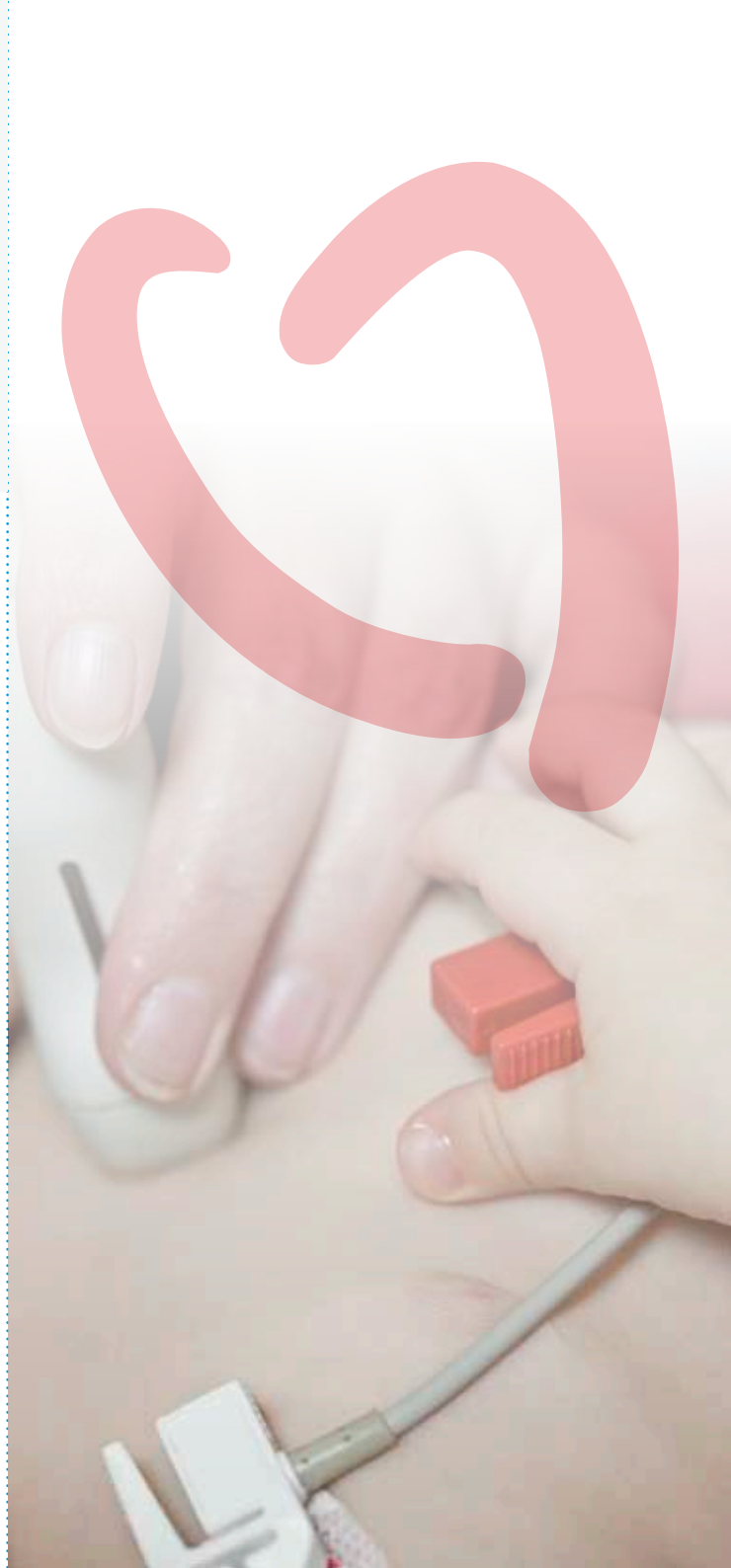


MonashHeart, Southern Health is committed to providing outstanding cardiac services for cardiac patients of all ages

- ♥ Every 10 minutes, an Australian dies from cardiovascular disease making it the biggest killer of all Australians
- ♥ MonashHeart treats more acute heart attack patients than anywhere else in Victoria
- ♥ Each year MonashHeart treats over 5700 patients with acute heart problems, the most in Victoria
- ♥ MonashHeart operates one of the busiest cardiac CT scanners in the world
- ♥ MonashHeart is the only cardiac service in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania to treat heart patients of all ages; from pre birth to our senior citizens
- ♥ MonashHeart is an internationally and nationally recognised leader in cardiovascular research
- ♥ Nearly one in 100 children in Australia are born with a heart defect. Congenital heart disease accounts for 50% of childhood lethal malformations



Fundraising Manager
Southern Health
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At the **Heart** of Care and Innovation

Some useful websites

MonashHeart
www.monashheart.org.au

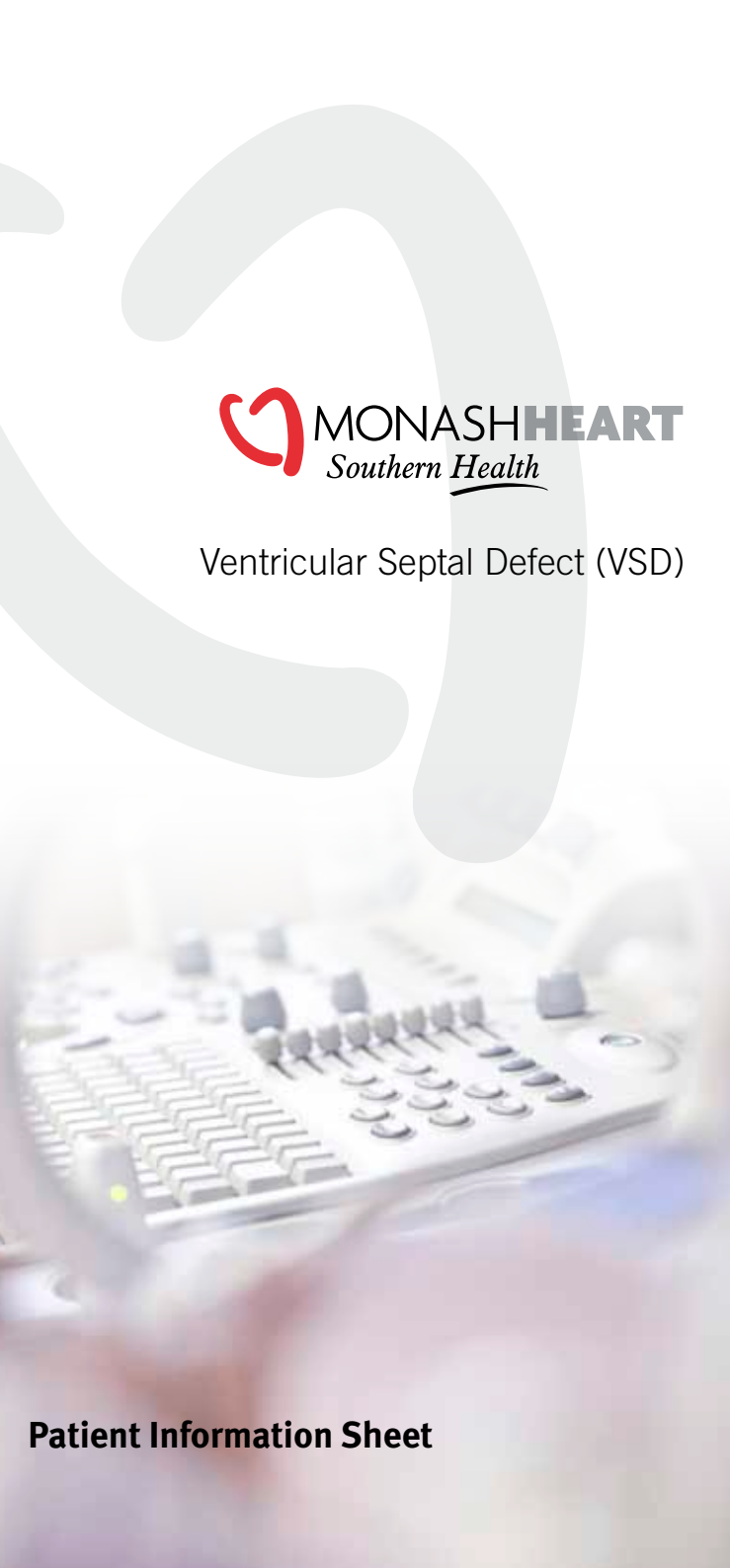
Patient Information
www.heartfoundation.com.au



Please use this space to write down any questions you may have:



Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD)



Patient Information Sheet

What is a Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD)?



A ventricular septal defect, or VSD, is a hole between the pumping chambers of the heart, the right and left ventricles. This is the most common congenital cardiac abnormality. The importance of a VSD depends on the size, which may be small, medium or large. Many VSDs, even some large ones, will become smaller or close completely with time. Occasionally they are next to one of the valves in the heart, and can on occasion, interfere with the function of the valve. If this occurs, it may mean that an operation is recommended, even if the hole is quite small.

A VSD allows 'pink' blood from the lungs to cross back to the right side of the heart, mixing with the 'blue' blood from the body, and going round the lungs again.

Small VSDs

Small VSDs are usually discovered because of a murmur, an extra noise from the heart. Because only a very small amount of extra blood goes through the hole to the lungs, small VSDs usually make a noise, but cause no other problems and require no treatment. They have a very high chance of closing spontaneously.



Large VSDs

Large VSDs usually cause symptoms. Before the baby is born it is very difficult for blood to go to the lungs. This changes when the baby is born, but the changes continue over the first four to eight weeks of life. Often the baby is well after birth and no murmur can be heard. However, over the weeks more and more extra blood goes through the hole and back to the lungs. The baby usually gets short of breath, which makes feeding more difficult.

Large VSDs are often discovered because the baby is not putting on weight as fast as normal. Medications can help, but although some of these holes may become smaller with time, many of them need to be closed. Usually this requires an operation in which the surgeons put a patch over the hole.

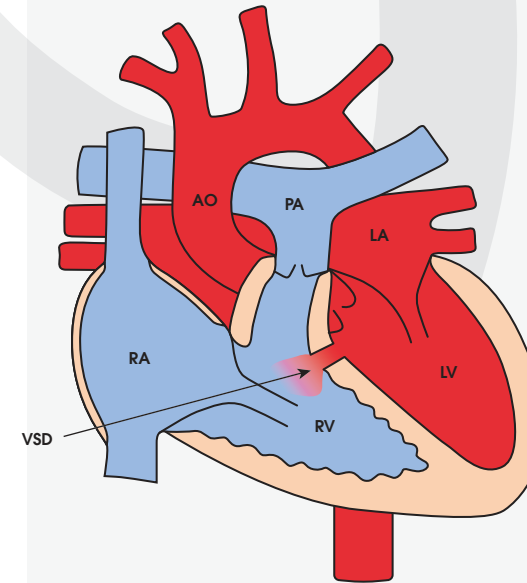
If large VSDs do not get smaller very quickly they can cause serious and irreversible problems in the pulmonary arteries (lung arteries) with time. For this reason, if an operation is necessary it is usually recommended between three and six months of age.



Moderate or multiple small VSDs

Moderate VSDs may behave either like small or large ones depending on how quickly they get smaller.

When several small holes are present it can be difficult to judge how important they will become over the first few weeks of life. These too can behave either like small or large VSDs. However, if an operation is necessary, they can be more difficult for the surgeons to close.



RA is right atrium

LA is left atrium

RV is right ventricle

LV is left ventricle

PA is pulmonary artery

AO is aorta

■ is blue blood from the body

■ is pink blood with oxygen from the lungs

I support MonashHeart, Southern Health in providing leading care to cardiac patients of all ages.

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