Gastrochisis

What is gastrochisis?
Gastrochisis (gas-troh-SKEE-sis) is a condition where a baby’s intestines stick outside of the baby’s body, through a hole beside the belly button. The hole can be small or large and sometimes other organs, such as the stomach and liver, can also stick outside of the baby’s body.

What types of problems occur with gastrochisis?
Immediate concerns are problems regulating the infant’s body temperature, dehydration, sepsis, and hypoglycemia. Surgery will be performed as soon as the infant is stable. The survival rate after surgery is 85-90%.

How common is gastrochisis?
One of every 1,900 babies born in the United States each year have gastrochisis. In Kentucky, one of every 1,600 babies has gastrochisis. White teenage mothers are at a higher risk of having a baby with gastrochisis. Of babies born with gastrochisis, 75% of them are firstborn babies. There is a very rare (4%) chance of having another baby born with gastrochisis.

What causes gastrochisis?
The cause of most cases of gastrochisis is unknown. It is believed to be associated with environmental (such as alcohol or tobacco use) and genetic factors.

How is gastrochisis treated?
A surgeon will operate to put the infant’s intestines into the abdomen shortly after birth.

What can I do to prevent gastrochisis?
Women can take steps before and during pregnancy to be healthy, including taking a multivitamin, not smoking, not taking illegal drugs, and not drinking alcohol during pregnancy.

Where do I go from here?
This is a very stressful time for you. You may not know how to feel. Most parents feel denial, grief, and even anger. It’s okay to feel that way and no one will blame you. You haven’t done anything wrong, and you’re not alone. Soon you will find other people and programs to help you through this. You may want to join a support group. Most importantly, take care of yourself. Be patient with yourself while you’re grieving, and remind yourself that things will get better. We’ve provided some information below to help you.

Where can I go for more information about gastrochisis?

**Kentucky Resources**
- [http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/firststeps](http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/firststeps) KY First Steps Program (Early Intervention System)

**National Resources**
March of Dimes Foundation [www.modimes.org](http://www.modimes.org) 1-888-MODIMES (1-888-663-4637)
National Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities Centers for Disease Control [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd) 1-770-488-7160