

# Hepatic (Liver) Calcifications

*Patient Information Series – What you should know, what you should ask.*

## **What is a Hepatic (Liver) Calcification?**

A hepatic calcification is an area of abnormal brightness visualised within the fetal liver.

## **How does a Hepatic (Liver) Calcification happen?**

Liver Calcifications are rare but are seen in about 1 in 1750 babies. The typical baby has only one calcification, but some have more than one. In most cases, the reason for the calcification is never found. In some, the calcification can be associated with problems with the liver blood vessels, infection with a virus, small (benign) tumors or chromosome abnormalities.

## **Should I have more tests done?**

Many women will choose to have more tests done to know more about the condition of the baby. The tests available depends on which country you live in. Tests to ask about include blood tests or tests on the amniotic fluid (fluid in the womb) to make sure that the calcification is not related to some common viruses, or genetic abnormalities.

## **What are the things to watch for during the pregnancy?**

Typically, additional ultrasound examinations are performed to make sure that the baby grows well, and additional calcifications are not identified in the brain, eyes, abdomen or liver of the baby.

## **What does it mean for my baby after it is born?**

In most cases, especially when there is only one liver calcification, the baby is healthy and the reason for the calcification is not found. If an explanation for the liver calcification is found, your doctor will further discuss with you what this means for the baby after it is born.

## **Will it happen again?**

When no other genetic reason is found to explain the liver calcification, the chance that this happens again is rare. If there is a genetic reason, then the risk depends on the reason and a consultation with a specialist may be helpful to help sorting this out.

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## What other questions should I ask?

- How many calcifications are there?
- Are they located in the liver only, or in other organs?
- How large are they?
- Do you see any other abnormalities in my baby?
- How often will I have ultrasound examinations done?
- What additional tests should I have done?
- Where should I deliver?
- Should the baby have additional tests after birth?
- Do you recommend that I speak with a neonatologist or a Geneticist?

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