

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 visualized within the fetal liver under ultrasound.

How does a Hepatic (Liver) Calcification happen?

Liver Calcifications are rare but are seen in about 1 in 1750 babies. The typical presentation involves a single calcification, though multiple instances can occur. The etiology of these calcifications can be diverse, including liver blood vessel issues, viral infections, benign tumors, or chromosomal 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. This can include blood tests or amniotic fluid analysis to rule out common viral infections or genetic abnormalities associated with the calcification. Screening tests for fetal infections, such as toxoplasmosis, rubella, syphilis, and herpes simplex, may also be performed.

What are the things to watch for during the pregnancy?

Typically, serial ultrasound examinations may be conducted to monitor fetal growth and to check for the appearance of additional calcifications in the brain, eyes, abdomen, or liver of the baby. These exams help in the early detection of any changes and can guide management decisions.

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 a genetic cause is present, the risk of recurrence depends on the specific genetic factors involved, and consultation with a specialist may be beneficial for risk assessment and management.

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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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