

Echogenic Intracardiac Focus

Ultrasound studies are a critical tool that your doctor or midwife depends on to provide a detailed assessment of your baby's anatomy. Occasionally, during a routine ultrasound study, a variant of normal anatomy, or "marker" is seen which can be associated with an increased risk of chromosomal abnormalities. Echogenic Intracardiac Foci (EIF) is one such marker, and although it is seen in the fetal heart, it is NOT associated with a heart defect in the baby.

Often, patients hear about an "abnormal finding in the baby's heart" and become very frightened that their baby is going to have a serious cardiac problem. Actually, the EIF is a finding that in association with other markers, can be associated with Down's syndrome. As isolated EIF (meaning there are no other risk factors, such as a family history of Down's syndrome, advanced maternal age greater than 35, or an abnormal Quad screen result) is most often an insignificant finding. However, your provider will offer you the option of having an advanced Level 2 ultrasound study done by a Perinatologist (usually at Shands) to examine your baby's anatomy more closely. You will also receive genetic counseling regarding your particular risk for Down's syndrome, and may be offered an amniocentesis at this visit, should you wish to schedule it.