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Understanding Heart Murmurs

Do you know what sound your heart makes? Typically the heart makes a “lubb-dupp” sound as its valves close. In some cases, however, you might hear a wooshing or swishing sound. These noises are referred to as heart murmurs, and are a relatively common issue in infants and young children.

Cardiologists classify heart murmurs into two broad categories: abnormal and innocent. Innocent heart murmurs are the most common type. As their name suggests, innocent murmurs are not associated with any concerning health issues. Instead, they occur when blood flows through the heart more rapidly than normal. Innocent heart murmurs are more common during pregnancy, after exercise, and in people with hyperthyroidism.

Abnormal heart murmurs, on the other hand, occur due to notable health problems. In children, these murmurs are often caused by structural problems in the heart, such as abnormalities in heart valves or holes in the walls between heart chambers. Abnormal murmurs in adults can be caused by infections that lead to damage in the heart’s structures, such as rheumatic fever or endocarditis.

The majority of heart murmurs are not serious. However, if you believe you or your child is experiencing this issue, it is important to have it checked out by your family doctor. Your doctor can advise you on whether the murmur is caused by something that requires further examination.

If your murmur is abnormal, we encourage you to visit us at South Palm Cardiovascular Associates to learn more about your options. Our team of cardiologists uses their expertise and state-of-the-art equipment to provide you with a better understanding of your heart’s condition and advise you on the best course of treatment. Knowing what causes your heart murmur and what you can do about it is a big step towards living a healthier life.