

# Birth Defect Series: Microtia



**What:** Babies with microtia usually have small or misshapen ears. They sometimes have small or missing ear canals that can affect hearing. Microtia can have four stages or severity. Stage one is mild and involves a small but normally shaped ear. Stage four means the entire outer ear is missing. This condition is known as anotia.

**Why:** There is no known cause of most cases of microtia. Mothers with diabetes have greater chances of having a baby with microtia. Also, mothers who get eat food low in carbs and folic acid increase their risk of having a baby with microtia. Taking the medication isotretinoin (Accutane®) is linked to several birth defects including microtia and anotia.

**When:** Your doctor should notice immediately if there is anything wrong with the outside part of the ear. Other tests can be done to see if there is anything abnormal with the inner parts of the ear.

**How:** Treatment for microtia may involve reconstructive surgery when the baby is older. Other treatments may involve testing your baby's hearing and possibly fitting for hearing aids. Early Intervention services can help with any speech delays if microtia affects hearing. If the condition is mild no other treatments may be necessary.

## Resources for Illinois Families

...

**Adverse Pregnancy  
Outcomes Reporting  
System**

[http://www.dph.illinois.gov/  
data-statistics/epidemiology/  
apors](http://www.dph.illinois.gov/data-statistics/epidemiology/apors)

**Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention**

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/  
birthdefects/anotia-  
microtia.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/anotia-microtia.html)

**Faces: The National  
Craniofacial Association**

[http://www.faces-cranio.org/  
Disord/Microtia.htm](http://www.faces-cranio.org/Disord/Microtia.htm)

**Early Intervention**

[http://www.dhs.state.il.us/  
page.aspx?item=31889](http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=31889)

**And visit your  
doctor for more  
information.**

Image courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities.

