

Anotia/Microtia

What is it?

Anotia (pronounced an-NO-she-uh) and microtia (pronounced my-KRO-she-uh) are birth defects of a baby's ear. **Anotia** is the absence of the outer ear. **Microtia** is an ear that is not formed properly and often is small. These conditions usually happen during the first few weeks of pregnancy. These conditions affect how a baby's ear looks, but not always the parts of the ear inside the head. Some babies with these conditions will have hearing loss. These conditions can affect one or both ears but more commonly affect just one ear.



Anotia



Microtia

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

How common is it?

The range in severity makes it difficult to determine how many babies will be born with microtia and anotia. Estimations range from less than 1 in 10,000 births to about 5 in 10,000 births that will be affected.

What causes it?

The causes of anotia and microtia are often unknown. There may be many factors that cause these conditions. More research is needed to understand the exact cause.

How is it diagnosed and treated?

Anotia and microtia are visible at birth. A doctor may want to perform a special test to see inside the inner ear. Treatment will depend on the severity. A special ear doctor, called an **audiologist**, will test for hearing loss. Hearing aids may help a child's ability to hear, and surgery may be an option to reconstruct the outer ear. Your child's doctor should discuss treatment options with you.