

Limb Reduction Defects

What is it?

Upper and lower limb defects occur when a part of the arm or leg does not form correctly during pregnancy. Some examples include:



Congenital absence of foot and toes



Longitudinal reduction defect of radius (shortened lower arm)

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

How common is it?

It is estimated that about 1,500 babies are born each year with an upper limb reduction defect and about 750 are born with lower limb reduction defects.

What causes it?

The exact cause of these defects is not known. There may be many factors that cause them. Research has shown that certain exposures during pregnancy can increase the chance of having a baby with this type of defect. These exposures include certain chemicals, viruses, medications, and tobacco. More research is needed to understand the exact causes.

How is it diagnosed and treated?

Limb reduction defects can be diagnosed during pregnancy by screening tests or by physical examination after the baby is born. Babies with these conditions will have different problems based on the type of defect. They may need assistance, special care, and different treatments. Treatment options can vary and include artificial limbs, braces, surgery, or therapy. Your child's doctor should discuss treatment options with you.



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For more information:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/ulimbreductiondefects.html>

Stanford Children's Hospital
<http://www.stanfordchildrens.org/en/topic/default?id=congenital-limb-defects-90-P02752>