



SickKids Cardiac Program

Facts and Figures

The Cardiac Program at The Hospital for Sick Children is one of the largest and most successful in the world. Children from across Ontario and beyond with serious congenital heart problems live longer and healthier lives thanks to the sophisticated and specialized treatments offered at SickKids, where survival rates for even the most complex surgeries are unsurpassed by any national or international program.

- One in 100 children are born with a heart defect, and more than half need surgery to survive. More than half who require surgery are under 1 year old, and almost a quarter are less than a month old. Sick Kids is the only centre in Ontario that is able to provide life-saving cardiac care for newborns with many forms of severe heart defects.
- The SickKids Cardiac Program is the largest in Canada. The Cardiac Program performs about 600 cardiac surgeries, 1,000 minimally-invasive procedures in the cardiac catheterization lab, and more than 13,000 diagnostic echocardiograms each year. In addition, there are more than 8,000 ambulatory visits to the cardiac clinic.
- SickKids is one of the largest paediatric cardiac transplantation centres in the world, and performs 80 per cent of all children's heart transplants in Canada. In 2006, SickKids performed 20 heart transplants on children from across the country, setting a record for the number of heart transplants in a year by a Canadian paediatric transplant centre.
- Complex cardiac cases require a highly skilled, multidisciplinary team such as the one at SickKids. The team includes surgeons, specialized cardiac anaesthesiologists, intensive care physicians, cardiologists, perfusionists, nurse practitioners, staff nurses, respiratory therapists, occupational and physical therapists, social workers, dietitians, discharge planners and child life workers with unique expertise and experience in paediatric cardiac care.
- The cardiac facility has an outpatient ambulatory area, a 29 bed in-patient unit and an 18-bed cardiac critical care unit.
- Sick Kids' clinical innovations and scientific discoveries in cardiovascular science have been saving lives in Ontario and around the world for decades. For example:



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- in 1963, Dr. William Mustard pioneered surgery to correct the transposition of the great arteries of the heart, the birth defect of “blue babies”;
- during the 1980s, Drs. Peter Olley and Flavio Coceani were pioneers in the use of life-saving prostaglandin therapy for infants with complex heart disease;
- in 2001, Sick Kids announced that infants awaiting a heart transplant need not wait for an organ of the same blood type;
- In July 2003, SickKids announced physicians were using a new minimally invasive procedure, called cardiac cryoablation, to correct abnormally fast heartbeats more safely and effectively.
- Sick Kids is a world leader in pioneering new ways to treat congenital heart disease without the need for open heart surgery, and has the largest paediatric interventional catheterization program in Canada. By inserting special catheters through a vein or artery, most holes in the heart can be closed, narrowed valves and arteries can be opened, and abnormal electrical pathways causing palpitations can be removed. Most children can go home within 24 hours after the procedure with nothing more than a small bandage on their leg.
- In 2005, SickKids became the first hospital in North America to use a catheter to replace a pulmonary valve, eliminating the need for open heart surgery in patients with heart valve disease. This innovative procedure is a significant step for SickKids in reducing multiple open-heart surgeries, prolonged hospital stays and long recovery periods for children with congenital heart defects.
- Construction has begun on a \$34-million, 20,000-square-foot Cardiac Diagnostic and Interventional Unit. The unit will be unique in Canada, and one of only a handful internationally, in that it will include two catheterization labs, with an integrated MRI, a cardiac ultrasound machine, a catheter navigation system and new systems for storing and sharing research information.
- Sick Kids' paediatric cardiac training program is one of the largest in North America. Since 1978, more than 240 Sick Kids-trained fellows have taken up key positions at hospitals around the world.