

# Cardiac antenatal classes



ECHO fund pioneering antenatal classes for parents whose unborn child has been diagnosed with a heart condition. These classes take place at St Thomas' Hospital every six weeks and are facilitated by members of the Tower Midwife team – the same people who will be coordinating obstetric care at the hospital.

## **Similar to regular antenatal classes the day will provide information on:**

- Preparing for the arrival of your baby
- Getting to and staying in and around St Thomas' Hospital
- Stages of labour and what to expect
- Pain relief in labour
- Your care in labour
- Feeding your baby
- Postnatal recovery
- Caring for your baby

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All subjects focus on preparing you for having a baby with a heart condition. In addition to this the midwives give a tour of the birth centre and the neonatal unit at St Thomas' Hospital.

Most importantly, parents have the opportunity to meet and talk to others in a similar situation, which many feel is an invaluable way of getting support.

An ECHO volunteer also attends – a parent who has experienced a similar situation – to talk about their own family story and to pass on information about other sources of support.

*Going along for my 20 week scan was exciting, I never expected it to be the hardest day of my life. Attending the ECHO antenatal class, I was reminded that it was ok to enjoy being pregnant and felt prepared for*

*what was about to happen, being in a room with 8 other couples going through the same thing was amazing.*