

Choosing the Right Heart Center for Your Child



Children's Hospital Colorado
Heart Institute



Where You Go First Matters

When your child needs heart care, you want to know they're in the best hands from the very beginning.

That's why it's so important to choose a heart center with the right experience, team and outcomes. At Children's Hospital Colorado, we don't just treat heart conditions, we lead the region in pediatric heart surgery and congenital heart care.

Not every hospital tracks or shares their surgical outcomes. We do — because transparency matters, and so does your peace of mind. Our outcomes exceed national benchmarks, and families trust us because we offer world-class care all in one place.

This guide will help you compare programs — and see why where you start your child's heart journey makes all the difference.

"Families who begin care outside of a dedicated children's heart center may be referred into surgical programs that lack transparent outcomes, national rankings, or dedicated, 24/7 teams of cardiac intensivists, cardiac nurses and consulting specialists. At Children's Colorado, we take the time to get the diagnosis right — and when surgery is needed, families can trust that it will be performed in one of the highest-volume, top-ranked pediatric heart centers in the country, with excellent published outcomes and a commitment to doing what's best for every child."



JAMES JAGGERS, MD

*Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgeon
Co-Director, Heart Institute*

Top-ranked, Experienced and Innovative



We share our rankings and outcomes publicly and welcome families to compare our numbers with other cardiac centers. We encourage you to review this document with another center of your choice as you consider care options for your family.

? Is your program nationally ranked by U.S. News & World Report?

U.S. New & World Report performs an extensive survey of the nation’s best hospitals every year and is a great resource for finding the best medical programs near you.

Children’s Hospital Colorado:



#1

Ranked for Pediatric Cardiology and Heart Surgery in Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region

#6

Ranked for Pediatric Cardiology and Heart Surgery in the nation

Cardiac center #2: _____

? What types of imaging and diagnostic capabilities do you offer?

Having advanced imaging capabilities ensures accurate diagnoses and allows care teams to create comprehensive care plans.

Children’s Hospital Colorado:

30,000+

Echocardiograms performed annually (including fetal)

600+

Cardiac MRIs annually (including fetal)

Cardiac center #2: _____

? How robust is your cardiac team and are they pediatric trained?

A large, specialized cardiac team means members have more expertise and experience treating a wide range of congenital heart conditions.

Children’s Hospital Colorado:

90+

Pediatric-trained heart specialists

400+

Dedicated Heart Institute team members

24

Beds in our Cardiac ICU with heart-trained doctors and nurses on site all day, every day

24/7

In-house cardiac intensivists and ECMO readiness for heart-lung emergencies

Cardiac center #2: _____

? How many pediatric heart procedures do you perform each year?

The more people a pediatric heart program sees each year (volumes), the more procedural experience its team members have, which means better results.

Children’s Hospital Colorado:

800

Heart surgeries in 2024

1,200+

Catheterization and EP procedures annually

550+

Heart transplants since the program’s inception

Cardiac center #2: _____

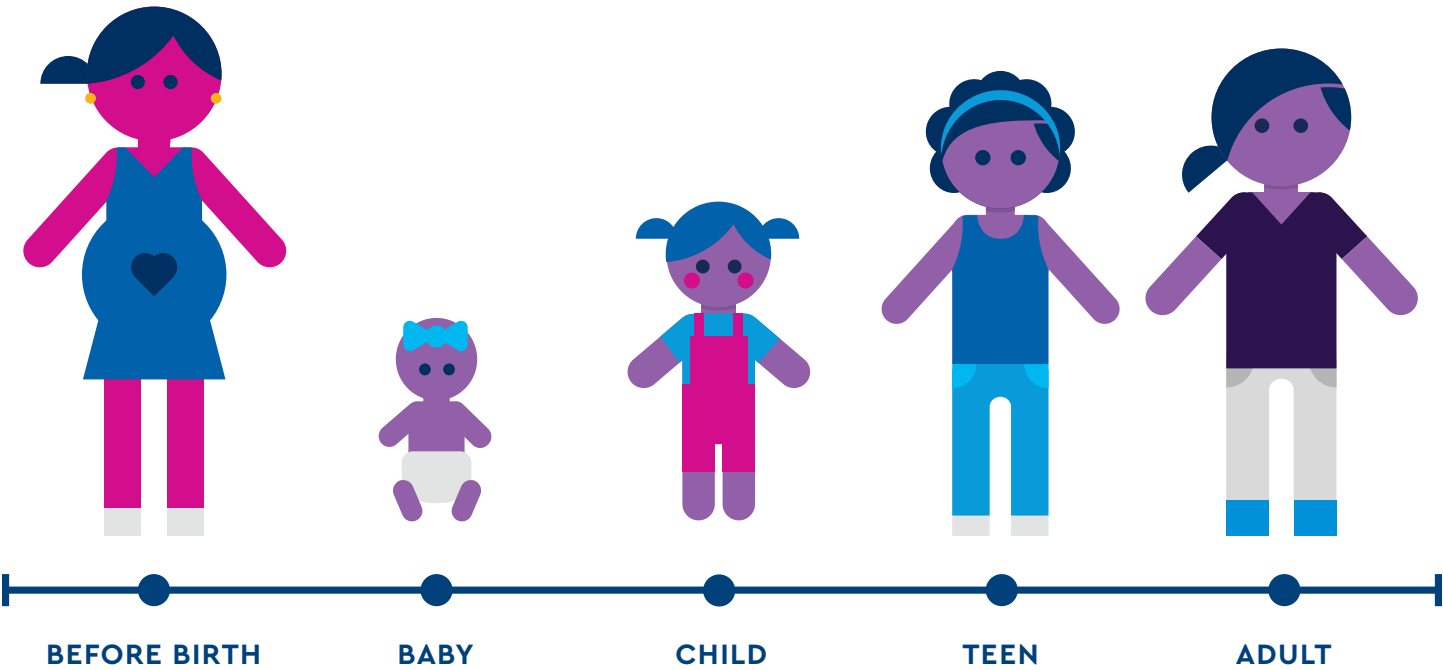
Providing Advanced Lifelong Heart Care in Colorado and Beyond



? Does your heart program care for all age ranges?

Heart care spans a lifetime so it's important to know what services are available as part of the program you select.

Lifelong Congenital Heart Care at Children's Colorado



Integrated prenatal care with onsite labor and delivery unit in our Colorado Fetal Care Center

Complete congenital heart and specialty care as your child grows — all under one roof and including integrated support from:

- Pulmonology
- Nephrology
- Neurology
- Digestive and liver
- Genetics
- And more

Expert heart care for teens and adults through our Adult Congenital Heart Disease Program

Cardiac center #2: _____

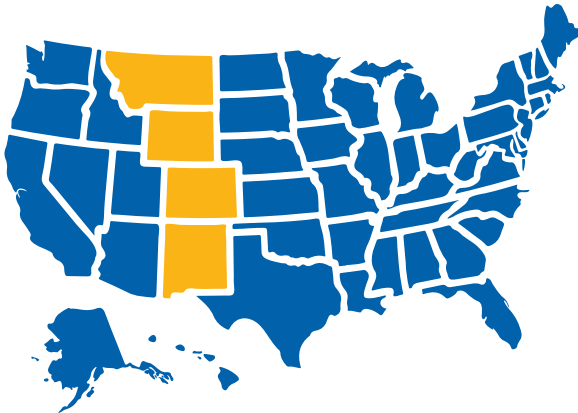
? What if I don't live near your heart center?

Having access to care is important. That's why we offer more than 20 cardiology outreach clinics and provide telemedicine options so you can get the best care no matter where you live.

Children's Hospital Colorado:

20+

Cardiology outreach clinics expanding our footprint throughout the region



Cardiac center #2: _____

? How do you invest in research and innovation to provide the most current treatment for my child?

Being part of the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus means we have access to the latest treatment innovations, clinical trials and more. The amount of research a hospital conducts is a great indicator of the level of commitment a center has to improving cardiac care.

Children's Hospital Colorado's Heart Institute:

1M+

In grants awarded each year for research and clinical trials

200+

Research articles published each year

Cardiac center #2: _____

Proven Excellence, Transparently Shared



? Do you share your cardiac surgical outcomes publicly?

Children's Hospital Colorado:

☒ Yes

☐ No

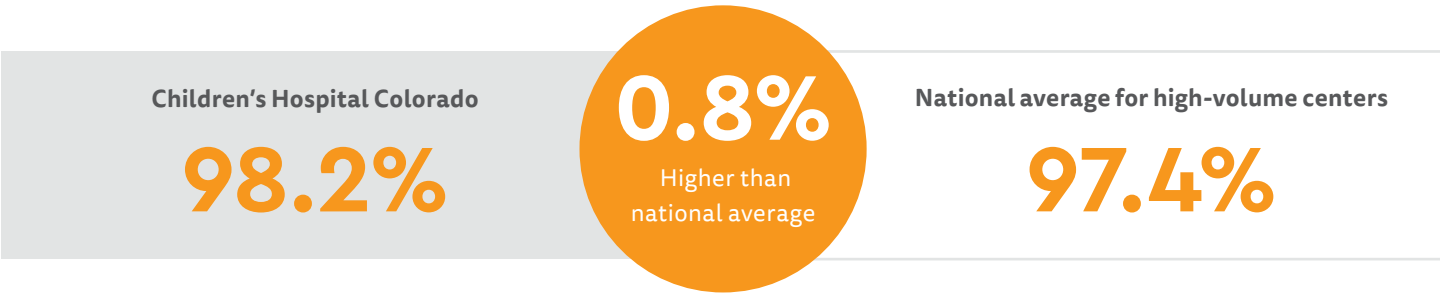
Cardiac center #2:

☐ Yes

☐ No

? What is your overall survival rate for all cardiac surgeries across all age groups?

Survival rate can give you an overall idea of how successful the heart surgery program is.



Cardiac center #2: _____

? What is your survival rate for each type of procedure?

Learning the survival rate of the same surgery your child is getting can be very valuable information — the more specific the better.

⬆ Higher survival rate is better

Cardiac procedure	Children's Hospital Colorado		National average
	Volume	Survival rate	Survival rate
Arterial switch + ventricular septal defect repair	11	100.0%	96.7%
Arterial switch repair	25	100.0%	98.3%
Atrioventricular septal defect repair	51	94.1%	98.0%
Fontan palliation	97	99.0%	99.0%
Glenn/hemi-Fontan palliation	120	100.0%	98.5%
Norwood palliation	92	94.6%	88.3%
Off cardiopulmonary bypass coarctation repair	93	96.8%	98.9%
Tetralogy of Fallot repair	72	100.0%	99.3%
Truncus arteriosus repair	12	91.7%	91.4%
Ventricular septal defect repair	154	98.7%	99.7%

Cardiac center #2:

Procedure type	Volume	Survival rate
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The data in this document was taken from July 2020 through June 2024 from the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) fall 2024 risk-adjusted report. The STS maintains the largest database for heart surgery in the nation.



What are your congenital cardiac surgery survival rates based on complexity?

Understanding how complex your child’s surgery is can help you get even more relevant information — STAT 1 is the least complex type of surgery and has the lowest level of risk and STAT 5 is the most complex type of surgery and has the highest level of risk.

Congenital cardiac surgery survival by complexity (STAT)

 Higher survival rate is better

STAT category	Children’s Hospital Colorado		National average
	Volume	Survival rate	Survival rate
STAT 1 (Lowest complexity)	1,003	99.5%	99.4%
STAT 2	394	98.7%	98.0%
STAT 3	225	96.9%	96.7%
STAT 4	159	94.3%	92.3%
STAT 5 (Highest complexity)	117	92.3%	84.7%

Cardiac center #2: _____

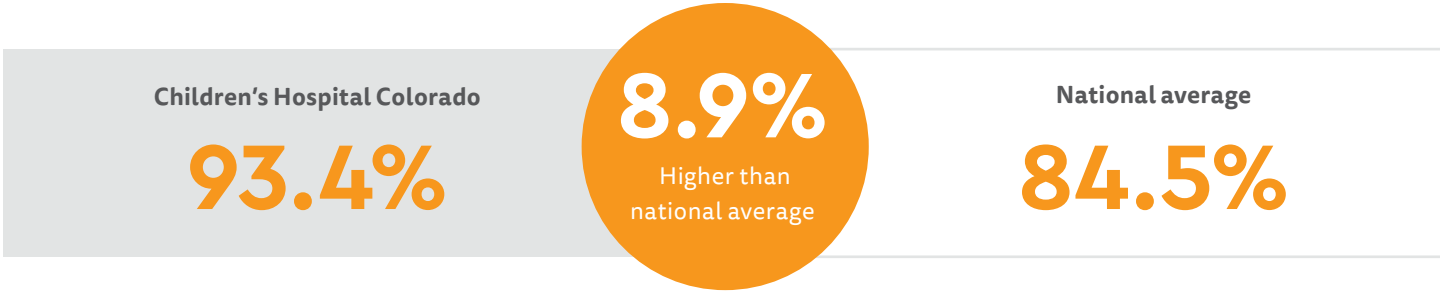
Volume

Survival rate



What is the survival rate for newborns who have the most complex surgeries (STAT 5)?

In the earliest moments of life, newborns may require heart surgery, and it is critical to understand survival rates for this specific age group. Higher survival rates for the most complex surgeries means more experience and often translates to better outcomes for the range of heart surgeries performed for newborns.




Cardiac center #2: _____

STAT 5 newborn survival rate



What is your post-operative length of stay?

Time in the hospital following pediatric heart surgery shows how quickly patients recover. This is a good indicator of how successful the surgery is and if there were any complications following surgery.

 Lower is better

Surgical procedure	Children’s Hospital Colorado	National average
	Median Days	Median Days
Arterial switch + ventricular septal defect repair	14	21
Arterial switch repair	15	17
Atrioventricular septal defect repair	7	17
Fontan palliation	8	13
Glenn/hemi-Fontan palliation	7	13
Norwood palliation	42	53
Off cardiopulmonary bypass coarctation repair	6	13
Tetralogy of Fallot repair	7	12
Truncus arteriosus repair	22	36
Ventricular septal defect repair	5	10

Cardiac center #2: _____

Procedure type

Median days

The data in this document was taken from July 2020 through June 2024 from the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) fall 2024 risk-adjusted report. The STS maintains the largest database for heart surgery in the nation.



Resources:



Review more volumes and outcomes data



Children's Colorado Video: How to choose a cardiac surgery center



Learn about our Family Resource Centers, which supports the whole family for extended stays by providing areas to cook and eat, do laundry, shower, relax and even sleep.

Contact us to schedule an appointment or get a second opinion:

 childrenscolorado.org/HeartCare

 720-777-6820



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