The UCLA Fetal Care Program provides comprehensive, state-of-the-art screening, monitoring and medical management of high-risk pregnancies before, during and after delivery. Some of the most frequently diagnosed and treated conditions include congenital heart abnormalities, abdominal-wall defects (gastroschisis and omphalocele), neural-tube (brain and spine) abnormalities, urinary-tract and airway obstructions, cleft lip and palate, cysts and tumors as well as complications of multiple gestation pregnancies.

Patients are referred to the Fetal Care Program from across Southern and Central California and beyond.

**Access to expert care**

Because the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) is adjacent to labor and delivery at Mattel Children’s Hospital UCLA, newborns can immediately receive full-service medical and surgical treatment. This arrangement eliminates the need to transport newborns to another facility and prevents mothers from being separated from their babies.

Mattel Children’s Hospital UCLA features level IV NICU staff and equipment, the highest designation available from the American Academy of Pediatrics.
Level IV personnel have expertise in the entire spectrum of pediatric medical and surgical subspecialties, including surgery to correct congenital heart defects and provide extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO), a state-of-the-art therapy similar to cardiopulmonary bypass that supports newborns struggling with severe but reversible cardiac or hypoxemic (inadequate oxygenation of the blood) respiratory failure.

The ECMO program at UCLA, in operation since 1998, has successfully treated newborns and pediatric patients with congenital diaphragmatic hernia, meconium aspiration, pulmonary hypertension and severe pneumonia. The ability to provide ECMO support is only available at a handful of neonatal centers, and Mattel Children's Hospital UCLA is among the Designated Centers recognized by the Extracorporeal Life Support Organization.

**Advanced fetal diagnostic evaluation**

When a fetal anomaly is suspected or detected during routine screening, patients first receive a comprehensive diagnostic ultrasound evaluation. Ultrasound examinations are performed using the highest-resolution imaging equipment with 2D, 3D and 4D technology and color Doppler capability. The examinations meet or exceed the standards set by the American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine (AIUM).

UCLA’s advanced screening/diagnostic capabilities include chorionic villus sampling (CVS) and amniocentesis for genetic diagnosis, and cardiac magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) for suspected fetal cardiac abnormalities.

**Coordinated, team approach**

A collaborative approach among our nationally recognized specialists in maternal-fetal medicine, neonatology, genetics, cardiology, neurology, urology, radiology and pediatric surgery ensures seamless evaluation and treatment continuity.

The team of fetal-care experts meets weekly to review every aspect of patient progress and prognosis. A close working relationship with referring physicians throughout the diagnostic and treatment process enables patients to obtain much of their care locally until a transfer is needed.

Personalized, ongoing patient support is facilitated by a patient navigator who provides a single point of contact for patients and their families in a comfortable, compassionate environment. The team of obstetricians and nurses at The BirthPlace at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center specializes in the care of high-risk pregnancies.

The UCLA Fetal Care Program is an integral member of the University of California Fetal Care Consortium, and has helped standardize and improve the diagnosis and treatment of several pre-birth conditions, including gastroschisis, congenital heart disease and twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome.

**Contact Information**

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