

Newborn chest X-ray can be used to diagnose congenital diaphragmatic hernias. Chest X-rays will typically show bowel loops on one side of the chest.

Ultrasound

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Prenatal ultrasound can be used to diagnose congenital diaphragmatic hernias.

Treatment

Corticosteroids \pm Surfactant

Quarter-on-steroids and Surf-Surfactant-Surfboard

Steroids may be used to treat CDH is diagnosed during the prenatal period. Steroids help expedite pulmonary development and reduce the risk of preterm labor and delivery. If the patient has significant respiratory distress i.e. NRDS, then surfactant can be administered to keep alveoli open to allow for adequate gas exchange.

Mechanical Ventilation

Machine Vent Ventilating

Patients may require intubation immediately after birth, mechanical ventilation, and stabilization. In some cases, patients may require extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO).

Surgery

Surgeon

Patients typically require surgery to correct the anatomic defects. In some cases, surgery is delayed for 3-4 days after birth to allow for lung maturation. Surgery involves reducing the bowel contents back into the abdomen and closing the diaphragmatic defect.

Considerations

Bowel Incarceration or Perforation

Bowel-bowl Incarcerated with Perforations

In congenital diaphragmatic hernias, the protruded loops of bowel may become incarcerated or perforate. This is a serious complication of CDH and requires immediate treatment.
