

Taking Care of Tiny Hearts

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The Pediatric Heart Center at Tulane Hospital for Children debuted the first and only combined hybrid cath lab and operating room suite in Louisiana this month. One of only 10 such hybrid cath labs in the country, the lab is not only a fully equipped pediatric catheterization lab but also a full operating room.



Cardiologists and surgeons work side-by-side at the combined hybrid cath lab operating room suite at Tulane Hospital for Children. (Photo from Tulane Medical Center)

Here, cardiologists and surgeons work side-by-side to open the chest, place delivery catheters in the heart and deploy devices. Outcomes are improved by avoiding cardiopulmonary bypass and shortened procedure times.

Of every 1,000 births in the United States, four to seven babies are born with congenital heart defects. Twice as many children in the U.S. die each year from congenital heart disease than die from all forms of childhood cancer combined. These children need an early diagnosis and specialized therapies to survive and lead a normal life, says Dr. Tom Yeh, director of the Tulane Pediatric Heart Center.

"We offer state-of-the-art technologies and procedures, tailored specifically to infants and children," Yeh says. "These procedures are carried out by a cardiac team with years of experience and impeccable results using advanced techniques for even the most complex defects."

At the Tulane Pediatric Heart Center, interventional cardiologists team up with cardiovascular surgeons to perform "hybrid" procedures, allowing more transcatheter therapies to be performed on infants and young children who would otherwise need open-heart surgery.

"Our philosophy is to avoid open-heart surgery whenever possible," says Dr. Michael Recto, chief of pediatric cardiology. "Innovative diagnostic tools and minimally invasive procedures like those done in the hybrid lab help us diagnose and treat infants earlier so they can have a long and normal life."

[Tulane Hospital for Children](#) is part of [Tulane Medical Center](#), a teaching, research and medical facility that is a partnership jointly owned by HCA and Tulane University.