What Is Anencephaly?

- It is a neural tube defect that occurs when the “cephalic” or head end of the neural tube does not close during development.
- This results in the absence of the skull, scalp, and most of the brain.
- An infant born with anencephaly is usually blind, deaf, unconscious, and unable to feel pain.

Signs and Symptoms

- Blindness
- Deafness
- Inability to feel pain
- Stillbirth
- Absence of large portions of the brain
- Malformation of Brainstem

What is the cause?

- The cause of anencephaly is unknown.
- Recent research has shown that child-bearing women who get 0.4mg of folic acid per day before they are pregnant and through early pregnancy may reduce the risk of having an infant born with anencephaly.
- There may be genetic and environmental factors involved.

Is there any treatment?

- Currently, there is no treatment for infants born with anencephaly.
Support Groups/Resources

- Anencephaly/Family Village
  www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/lib
  1-888-206-7526

- Kennedy Krieger Institute
  http://www.kennedykrieger.org
  443-923-9200

- March of Dimes
  www.marchofdimes.com
  1-410-546-2241

- Office for Genetics and Children with Special Health Care Needs
  http://fha.maryland.gov/genetics/bdris.cfm
  1-800-638-8864

- The Parents’ Place Of Maryland
  www.ppmd.org
  410- 768-9100