Rectal/Anal Atresia Fact Sheet

What is Rectal/Anal Atresia?

- It is the absence or closure of the rectum (end of intestine where stool is held) or anus (opening for stool)

What is the cause of Rectal/Anal Atresia?

- The defect is caused by abnormal development of the fetus and there are many forms of rectal/anal atresia that are associated with other birth conditions
- VACTERL association is a combination of the following: vertebral (back bone) defects; anal defects; cardiac defects; trachea-esophageal abnormalities; kidney malformations and limb abnormalities.

Signs and Symptoms

- Missing anal opening or anal opening ending in blind pouch
- Inability to pass stool within the first 24-48 hours after birth

Is there any treatment for Anal Rectal Atresia?

- Surgery is needed to reconnect the rectum and anus
Support Groups/Resources

- March of Dimes  
  www.marchofdimes  
  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

- NIH Health information:  
  http://health.nih.gov/topic/BirthDefects

- CDC National Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities  
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/index.html

- National Organization of Rare Disorders (NORD)  
  http://www.rarediseases.org/

- Birth Defects Research for Children, Inc  
  http://www.birthdefects.org/