

Doll Helps to Detect Life-threatening Heart Defects in Babies

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BEGINS

More than just a toy: the baby dolls being used to detect heart defects in the womb

Could a hyper-realistic doll be the secret to helping to detect heart defects in babies whilst they're still in the womb, and save lives as a result? That's what one charity is hoping, as it launches an appeal encouraging people to "**Donate a Doll**" to hospitals up and down the country. Tiny Tickers is a national charity that campaigns to increase early detection rates of cardiac conditions in newborn babies. Around 6,000 babies are born with a serious heart defect in the UK each year, and around 1,000 of these newborns head home with no one realising their lives are in danger.

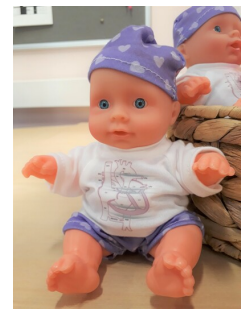
Through the **Donate a Doll** appeal people can send a hospital one of Tiny Tickers' situs dolls, which help sonographers to scan tiny hearts during pregnancy scans.

"While delivering training to sonographers, I realised that by physically placing a baby doll (that's a similar size to a 20 week foetus) over the mother's abdomen in the same position as the baby is lying, it helped the sonographer to see which way the heart should be pointing and demonstrate where the scan probe should be over the heart to obtain all the required views," says Anne Rhodes, Head of Training at Tiny Tickers.

Each doll wears a t-shirt with an anatomical diagram of the heart on it, so sonographers can see where to put their scan probes in order to capture the five required views of the heart.

The **Donate a Doll** appeal coincides with Giving Tuesday on December 3rd, a day designed to encourage millions of people across the world to come together and support a good cause. Last year celebrities including Sir Richard Branson, Cara Delevingne and Dua Lipa all got behind the campaign, with £7.8 million raised via online donations in the UK. Tiny Tickers are hoping that their situs dolls could make the difference when it comes to detecting serious heart defects during pregnancy scans. The charity is asking supporters to donate £10, which will enable them to purchase a doll and send it to a sonography team at a hospital. Each donor can name

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their doll after a loved one and will receive a birth certificate via email. For more information on the appeal, and to hear from a sonographer on why the situs dolls are so important, please visit

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