



To Emory Adult Congenital Heart Center Patients:

Thinking about applying for Social Security Disability?

May we offer some tips?

Ask your doctor if you are medically disabled.

- You can always apply for Social Security disability, but you should know whether or not your medical condition and clinical record will support your application.
- Have you stopped working? It's very difficult to make a case for disability when you are working.
- Know that disability applicants are often denied several times, even if their doctor considers them disabled. The repeated denial and appeal process can take up to two years or longer.
- Think about how you will support yourself during your wait. Do you have family that will help you?
- You can apply any of several ways. You can apply on line, call and schedule an appointment, or go into your local office.
- Have you had an exercise stress test? If you are applying for disability, ask your doctor about taking a stress test.
- You will need to have the name and address of all your medical providers. It's good to keep a card from each medical provider for easy reference.
- Consider whether you will use a disability attorney after you are denied. If you do, be sure to call them at least every few months to keep abreast of activity on your case.
- If you have serious financial assets, it's best to get legal consultation about a disability application.
- If your doctor says they consider you to be disabled, it is important that you continue to appeal each time you are denied in order to keep your application alive. You must appeal within the time frame stated in the denial letter. You can appeal online or in writing.
- Keep a copy of everything you submit to the Social Security Administration.

How does Social Security look at disability for the Congenital Heart Disease patient?

Under 18: "Marked or severe limitations expected to last for a continuous period or at least 12 months".

18 & over: "Impairments severe enough to prevent a person from doing any gainful activity".

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** are the two disability assistance programs that are administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA). Some people qualify under one of these programs and some qualify under both. For either program, the person must meet SSA medical criteria to qualify for benefits.

Social Security Disability Insurance pays benefits to you and certain members of your family if you are "insured," meaning that you worked and paid into Social Security long enough. After you receive disability benefits for 24 months, you will be eligible for Medicare. **Supplemental Security Income** pays benefits based on financial need. Medicaid comes with SSI eligibility.

How to get more information: Go online to **www.ssa.gov/disability** or call **1-800-772-1213** between 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday.