

Kawasaki Disease

Kawasaki Disease (Cow-a-saw-kee) is an illness that young children, usually younger than five years old, can get. No one knows what causes it. The illness can last from two weeks to a few months.

How is it diagnosed?

We do not have a test that can diagnose Kawasaki Disease but rather the diagnosis is made when doctors see a few or all of these symptoms in a child:

- Fever higher than 101.5° F that lasts for at least four days
- Red, blood-shot eyes called conjunctivitis (kon-junk-ti-vi-tis)
- Swollen lymph nodes of the neck and armpits called lymphadenopathy (lim-fad-e-nop-a-thee)
- Rash
- Red, cracked lips, very red tongue (strawberry tongue), redness in the mouth and the back of the throat
- Swollen and red hands and feet followed by peeling skin on the fingers and toes

Also, children with Kawasaki Disease are often very fussy.

Can this disease be serious?

Kawasaki Disease causes swelling and inflammation of the small blood vessels in the body. This is called vasculitis (vas-cue-li-tis). Sometimes this swelling can affect vessels of the heart. This can be very serious. An echocardiogram (an ultrasound of the heart) is used to look for damage to the heart or vessels near the heart. A pediatric heart doctor called a cardiologist will be asked to see your child and assist the with the treatment plan.

What is the treatment?

Your child will receive medicines to decrease the swelling in the vessels and to decrease the chance it will affect the heart. These medicines are aspirin and IVIG.

- High dose aspirin is given to reduce inflammation in the first stages of the illness. As your child improves the dose will be decreased. Aspirin is then continued for 6 to 8 weeks to prevent your child's blood from making clots.
- Immune globuline called IVIG: this is an IV medicine used to decrease inflammation. It is given slowly through an IV into a vein over 8 to 12 hours. It is usually given just one time.

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Before your child can leave the hospital, the medical team will check that all these things have been done:

1. Child was observed for 12 to 24 hours after IVIG infusion was completed
2. Child has had no fever for at least 18 hours
3. Symptoms are improving and overall the child's condition is improved
4. Echocardiogram was done
5. Cardiologist saw your child and made recommendations to the medical team
6. Child's community doctor was contacted and discharge instructions and follow up plans have been faxed to the doctor's office
7. Child has a confirmed appointment with his or her community doctor within 72 hours of leaving hospital
8. Cardiology follow up appointment is scheduled

Your child must be followed carefully for 6 to 8 weeks after leaving the hospital. It is very important to keep the follow-up appointments with your child's doctor and with the cardiologist. Take your child to the same doctor that the Children's Hospital doctor talked to during your child's hospital stay. This is very important because not all doctors or clinics know how to treat Kawasaki Disease. Your doctor who was involved from the start will be better able to pick up any changes in your child and get treatment early to avoid heart complications. At the 6 to 8 week follow up appointment the cardiologist will talk with you about any further follow up needs.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs) about Kawasaki Disease:

- *How serious is Kawasaki Disease?*
We know the disease may sound very scary. Your child will appear very ill, have a rash, and be fussy. The heart complications occur in about 5% to 20% of **untreated** children. Most children recover without any problems when treated with aspirin and IVIG.
- *How long does this illness last?*
It may take a few weeks for your child to start to feel better and about 6 to 8 weeks for your child to fully recover from the illness.
- *Is my child contagious?*
No, Kawasaki Disease cannot be spread from person to person.

TO LEARN MORE

- Medical Unit (206) 987-2212
- Your Child's Health Care Provider

Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Please call the Family Resource Center at (206) 987-2201.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Children's Hospital. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's health care provider.