

KAWASAKI DISEASE

What is Kawasaki disease?

Kawasaki disease is a rare vasculitis, which strikes children.

What causes Kawasaki disease?

There is no known cause of Kawasaki, but it is not contagious.

Who gets Kawasaki disease?

Over 4,000 children develop it each year. 80% of patients are under the age of 5.

What are the symptoms?

Patients usually begin with a high fever lasting at least five days. Symptoms may include red eyes, lips, and mouth; rash; swollen and red hands and feet; and swollen lymph nodes. The disorder affects the mucus membranes, lymph nodes, walls of the blood vessels, and the heart.

The most important aspect of the disease is the heart's involvement. The disease can cause inflammation of blood vessels in the coronary arteries, which can lead to aneurysms. Kawasaki is the leading cause of acquired heart disease in children.

How is Kawasaki disease diagnosed?

Diagnosis is usually based on evaluation of classic symptoms. Possible diagnostic tests include blood studies (complete blood count and blood sedimentation rate), electrocardiogram, echocardiogram, chest x-ray and urinalysis.

What is the prognosis?

With early recognition and treatment, full recovery can be expected. However, 2% of patients die from complications of coronary blood vessel inflammation. Patients who have had Kawasaki should have an echocardiogram every 1-2 years to screen for heart problems.

What is the treatment?

Immediate treatment is critical to avoid permanent damage to the coronary arteries and heart. Standard treatment includes high doses of Intravenous gamma globulin.

The patient's condition usually greatly improves within 24 hours of treatment.

Radiography (x-ray) of the chest may be used to look for changes in the aorta. Angiography or arteriography is used to help determine the location and appearance of vessels affected by the disease.

What is Vasculitis?

Vasculitis is an inflammation of the blood vessels, arteries, veins or capillaries. Vasculitis is a family of diseases. The cause of vasculitis is unknown, but through research and treatment, outcomes have improved significantly over the past 20 years.

Continued research is essential for further advances in these diseases, which can be life-threatening.

About the Vasculitis Foundation

The Vasculitis Foundation (VF) is the largest international patient support group for people with vasculitis.

Through its website, newsletter, brochures, informational materials, medical consultants, symposia and chapters, VF raises awareness and educates its patients, family members and friends.



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www.VasculitisFoundation.org

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