

Kawasaki disease

This leaflet gives more information about Kawasaki disease, including symptoms, tests and treatments.

What is Kawasaki disease and why does my child have it?

In the UK Kawasaki disease affects about 8 in 100,000 children under the age of five years. The cause of Kawasaki disease is unknown, but it is most likely due to a combination of factors. Some children may be more likely to get the condition because of genetic and/or environmental factors, like infections and the way a child's body reacts to that infection.

Kawasaki disease may cause inflammation of blood vessels (coronary arteries) supplying the heart muscle.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Kawasaki disease has a range of symptoms including:

- fever greater than 38C lasting more than five days.
- red rash all over the body
- swollen glands in the neck
- red bloodshot eyes
- red lips, tongue or mouth
- swelling of fingers and toes, which may turn red and start peeling.

Some children develop abnormal swelling in the blood vessels of the heart. This is called an aneurysm.

Does my child need any tests to confirm the diagnosis?

Kawasaki disease is normally diagnosed based on the symptoms. Tests will include

- blood tests to look for signs of infection and inflammation
- an echocardiogram, which involves looking at the blood vessels of the heart using ultrasound. This may be done more than once, as the swelling of the blood vessels is not always seen at the beginning of the illness.

What treatments are available?

Treatment medicines include:

- IVIG (intravenous (given through a drip) immunoglobulin – a blood product). This helps reduce the inflammation and the risk of swelling in the blood vessels of the heart.
- aspirin taken by mouth helps reduce the risk of blood clots. If there are no problems with your child's coronary arteries at the six-week outpatient appointment, the aspirin can usually be stopped.
- steroids and other medicines are also available if additional treatments are needed.

What happens if my child does not receive treatment?

Without treatment, around one in five Kawasaki patients may develop an aneurysm. The aneurysm can weaken the wall of the artery. Early treatment is important to reduce the risk of lifelong, serious heart damage.

Is there anything I can do to help my child?

It is important that your child takes all medicines as prescribed and attends all follow-up appointments to check that the heart is working, and to catch early any problems that may happen.

Your child's scheduled live vaccines should be postponed for six months after receiving IVIG. The infectious diseases team will discuss with you the best time to for your child to receive vaccines.

If your child develops chickenpox while on aspirin, please contact your child's Kawasaki team or your GP.

Useful sources of information

The UK Kawasaki Disease Foundation – Societi – offering advice and support to patients and their families, **w:** www.societi.org.uk

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about Kawasaki disease please contact Kawasaki clinical nurse specialist, **mobile:** 07468 700165, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm, or our secretary, **t:** 020 7188 4679. Out of hours, please contact NHS111.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **w:** www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

t: 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am-5pm

e: letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day. **t:** 111 **w:** 111.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department. **t:** 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints)
e: complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch. **t:** 020 7188 8815
e: languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS website

Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing.
w: www.nhs.uk

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