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Kawasaki Disease

Also called: Mucocutaneous lymph node syndrome

What is Kawasaki disease?

Kawasaki disease is a rare illness that usually affects small children. Other names for the disease are Kawasaki syndrome and mucocutaneous lymph node syndrome. It is a type of vasculitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/vasculitis.html>] , which is inflammation of the blood vessels. Kawasaki disease is serious, but most children can fully recover if they are treated right away.

What causes Kawasaki disease?

Kawasaki disease happens when the immune system injures the blood vessels by mistake. Researchers do not fully know why this happens. But when it does, the blood vessels become inflamed and can narrow or close off.

Genetics may play a role in Kawasaki disease. There may also be environmental factors, such as infections. It does not seem to be contagious. This means that it cannot be passed from one child to another.

Who is more likely to develop Kawasaki disease?

Kawasaki disease usually affects children under the age of 5. But older children and adults can sometimes get it. It is more common in boys than girls. It can affect children of any race, but those with Asian or Pacific Islander descent are more likely to get it.

What are the symptoms of Kawasaki disease?

The symptoms of Kawasaki disease may include:

- High fever [<https://medlineplus.gov/fever.html>] lasting at least five days
- A rash [<https://medlineplus.gov/rashes.html>] , often on the back, chest, and groin
- Swollen hands and feet
- Redness of the lips, lining of the mouth, tongue, palms of the hand, and soles of the feet
- Pink eye [<https://medlineplus.gov/pinkeye.html>] (conjunctivitis)
- Swollen lymph nodes in the neck

Contact your child's health care provider if your child has a fever for 4 days, especially if they have any other symptoms of Kawasaki disease.

What other problems can Kawasaki disease cause?

Sometimes Kawasaki disease can affect the walls of the coronary arteries. These arteries bring blood and oxygen to your heart. This can lead to:

- An aneurysm [<https://medlineplus.gov/aneurysms.html>] (bulging and thinning of the walls of the arteries). This can raise the risk of blood clots [<https://medlineplus.gov/bloodclots.html>] in the arteries. If the blood clots are not treated, they could lead to a heart attack [<https://medlineplus.gov/heartattack.html>] or internal bleeding.
- Inflammation in the heart.

- Heart valve problems [<https://medlineplus.gov/heartvalvediseases.html>] .

Kawasaki disease can also affect other parts of the body, including the brain and nervous system, the immune system, and the digestive system.

How is Kawasaki disease diagnosed?

There is no specific test for Kawasaki disease. To find out if your child has Kawasaki disease, your child's provider:

- Will do a physical exam, which includes looking at the signs and symptoms
- Will likely order blood and urine tests to rule out other diseases and check for signs of inflammation
- May order tests [<https://medlineplus.gov/hearhealthtests.html>] to check for damage to the heart, such as an echocardiogram and electrocardiogram [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/electrocardiogram/>] (EKG)

What are the treatments for Kawasaki disease?

Kawasaki disease is usually treated in the hospital with an intravenous (IV) dose of immunoglobulin (IVIG) antibodies.

Antibodies are proteins that your immune system makes to fight infections.

Aspirin may also be part of the treatment. But do not give your child aspirin unless the health care provider tells you to.

Aspirin can cause Reye syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/reyesyndrome.html>] in children. This is a rare, serious illness that can affect the brain and liver.

Treatment usually works. But if it is not working well enough, the provider may also give your child other medicines to fight the inflammation. If the disease affects your child's heart, they might need additional medicines, surgery, or other medical procedures.

Start Here

- Kawasaki Disease (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/kawasaki.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/kawasaki.html>]
- Kawasaki Disease in Infants & Young Children [<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/heart/Pages/Kawasaki-Disease.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/health-issues/conditions/heart/paginas/kawasaki-disease.aspx>]
- What Is Kawasaki Disease? [<https://www.heart.org/-/media/Files/Health-Topics/Answers-by-Heart/What-is-Kawasaki-Disease.pdf>] (American Heart Association) - PDF

Symptoms

- Kawasaki Disease: Signs, Symptoms, and Diagnosis [<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/kawasaki-disease/kawasaki-disease-signs-symptoms--diagnosis>] (American Heart Association)

Diagnosis and Tests

- Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate (ESR) [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/erythrocyte-sedimentation-rate-esr/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/tasa-de-sedimentacion-eritrocitica/>]
- Heart Tests [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/heart-tests>]  (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/es/salud/estudios-cardiacos>]

Treatments and Therapies

- Kawasaki Disease: Complications and Treatment [<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/kawasaki-disease/kawasaki-disease-complications-and-treatment>] (American Heart Association)

Related Issues

- What is Vasculitis? [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/vasculitis>]  (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)

Genetics

- Kawasaki disease: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/kawasaki-disease>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Mucocutaneous Lymph Node Syndrome [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Mucocutaneous+Lymph+Node+Syndrome%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

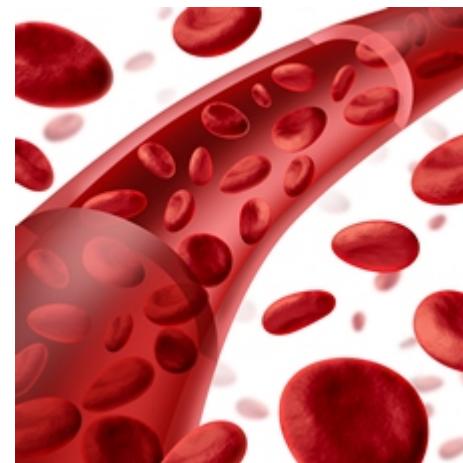
- Article: Kawasaki disease: insights into the roles of T cells. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40746545>]
- Article: A retrospective cohort study using machine learning to predict coronary artery... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40745593>]
- Article: Retrospective Analysis of Risk Factors Impacting the Severity of Coronary Artery... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40705545>]
- Kawasaki Disease -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Mucocutaneous+Lymph+Node+Syndrome%22%5Bmajr%3Aexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Find an Expert

- American Heart Association [<https://www.heart.org/en/>]
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/>] 

Patient Handouts

- Electrocardiogram [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003868.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003868.htm>]
- Kawasaki disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000989.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000989.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

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[Kawasaki disease \[<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000989.htm>\]](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000989.htm)

Related Health Topics

Vasculitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/vasculitis.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Kawasaki Disease* is the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute [<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/>]

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