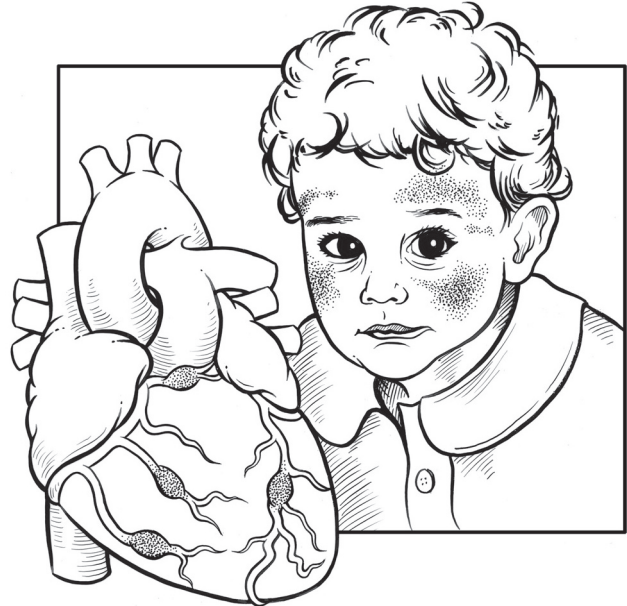


# What is Kawasaki Disease?

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It's a children's illness. It's also known as Kawasaki syndrome or mucocutaneous lymph node syndrome. It's named after Dr. Tomisaku Kawasaki, a Japanese pediatrician. About 80 percent of people with it are under age 5. Children over age 8 rarely get it. It occurs about 1.5 times more often in boys than in girls, but it occurs in children of all races. In the United States, it's more frequent among Asian-American children.



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## What are the common symptoms of Kawasaki disease?

- Fever
- Rash
- Swollen hands and feet
- Redness of the whites of the eyes
- Swollen lymph glands in the neck
- Irritation and inflammation of the mouth, lips and throat

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## What causes Kawasaki disease?

Doctors don't know what causes it. It doesn't appear to be hereditary or contagious. Evidence suggests that an infectious agent

such as a virus causes it. It's very rare for more than one child in a family to develop it.

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## How does Kawasaki disease affect the heart?

Damage sometimes occurs to the blood vessels, including those that supply the heart muscle (coronary arteries) and to the heart muscle itself. Part of a coronary wall can be weakened and balloon in an aneurysm. A blood clot can form in this weakened area and block the artery. If the clots are not prevented, this can lead to a heart attack.

Other changes include inflammation of the heart muscle or the sac that surrounds the heart. Abnormal working of some heart valves can also occur. The heart problems usually go away in five or six weeks. There's usually no lasting damage. But sometimes coronary artery damage persists.

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## How is Kawasaki disease treated?

Doctors often use aspirin to reduce fever, rash, joint inflammation and pain. This also helps prevent blood clots from forming.

Intravenous gamma globulin can reduce the risk of developing coronary artery abnormalities when given early in the illness.

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## How can I learn more?

1. Talk to your doctor, nurse or other health-care professionals. If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk.
2. Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721), or visit [americanheart.org](http://americanheart.org) to learn more about heart disease.

3. For information on stroke, call 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) or visit us online at [StrokeAssociation.org](http://StrokeAssociation.org).

We have many other fact sheets and educational booklets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one.

Knowledge is power, so *Learn and Live!*

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## Do you have questions or comments for your doctor or nurse?

- Take a few minutes to write your own questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider. For example:

*What can I do to help my child deal with Kawasaki disease?*

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