

### **What is Kawasaki disease?**

Kawasaki disease, also known as Kawasaki syndrome, is a serious illness of children that causes fever and affects the entire body. It is a relatively rare disease. Kawasaki disease is a leading cause of acquired heart disease in the United States.

### **Who is at risk for Kawasaki disease?**

Most cases occur in children younger than five years of age. Cases are uncommon in children older than eight years. Cases in children typically occur more often in boys than girls.

### **What are the symptoms of Kawasaki disease?**

All cases have a fever that does not respond to antibiotics. The fever lasts more than five days and is associated with a rash, swollen lymph nodes, swelling of the hands and feet, irritability, and red eyes, lips, throat and tongue. The rash is usually confined to the patient's trunk and is sometimes followed by a peeling of the skin on the hands and fingers. Coronary artery abnormalities are a serious result of untreated Kawasaki disease, occurring in 20-25% of children. The fatality rate of Kawasaki disease is low at 0.2%.

### **How soon do symptoms appear?**

It is unknown how long it takes for symptoms to appear, since the cause of the disease and how it is spread is unknown.

### **How is Kawasaki disease spread?**

Little is known about the way a person gets Kawasaki disease or how it spreads. It does not appear to be transmitted from person-to-person. Since outbreaks occur, it may be caused by an infectious agent and/or environmental trigger. More cases occur during the winter and spring.

### **When and for how long is a person able to spread the disease?**

This is also unknown.

### **How is a person diagnosed?**

There is no test for Kawasaki disease. A physician will diagnose the disease based on symptoms.

### **What is the treatment?**

Most patients are treated with supportive therapy in the hospital where they can be closely watched. Fever reducing medications are often prescribed. Prevention of coronary artery abnormalities may also be established.

### **Does past infection make a person immune?**

Recurrences have been reported but they are extremely rare.

### **Should children or others be excluded from child care, school, work or other activities if they have Kawasaki disease?**

No, infants, toddlers and school-aged children should not be excluded unless the staff determines the child is unwilling or unable to participate in activities.

They should also be excluded if the staff determines that they cannot care for the child without compromising their ability to care for the health and safety of the other children in the group.

All others can attend work and other functions as long as they are well enough to do so and are able to practice good hand washing and respiratory etiquette.

### **What can be done to prevent the spread of Kawasaki disease?**

At the present time, no specific prevention efforts are recommended.

### **Additional Information:**

Additional information is available by calling the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2180.

#### Resources:

American Academy of Pediatrics. [Kawasaki Disease]. In: Kimberlin DW, Brady MT, Jackson MA, Long SS, eds. *Red Book: 2018 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases*. 31<sup>st</sup> ed. Itasca, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2018: [490 - 497].

Heymann, D. L. (2015). *Control of Communicable Diseases Manual, 20<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Kawasaki Syndrome. American Public Health Association. 2015: 326-328

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). Kawasaki Disease. [www.cdc.gov/kawasaki/](http://www.cdc.gov/kawasaki/).