

Kawasaki Disease in children of Black African or Black Caribbean heritage



“Children of Black African or Black Caribbean heritage are two and a half times more times more likely to be affected by Kawasaki Disease

than expected – and may be more likely to suffer heart damage.

It’s important to raise awareness of Kawasaki Disease to help children receive a quicker diagnosis and receive treatment sooner. This can reduce the risk of permanent heart damage from Kawasaki Disease.

Donated blood helps to make medicine to protect children’s hearts from Kawasaki Disease, so it’s important to think about donating blood to help children in your world.”

Dr Ifeanyichukwu Okike,
Consultant Paediatrician, Scientific Advisory Board, Societi Foundation

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We are the
UK Foundation for
Kawasaki Disease

*Padilla, L.A., Collines, J.I. et. al. Kawasaki Disease and Clinical Outcome Disparities Among Black Children (2021) Journal of Paediatrics 229: 54-60

**Tulloh, R.M., Mayon-White, R., Harnden et. al. Kawasaki disease: a prospective population survey in the UK and Ireland from 2013 to 2015. Archives of Disease in Childhood 2018: 315087

*** Societi Foundation Kawasaki Disease hospital admissions study 2016 & 2019 Vs ONS data

What is Kawasaki Disease?

It is mainly a childhood illness but it can affect people of any age. Its cause is unknown. Kawasaki Disease is more common than some types of meningitis but children can be just as poorly.

#1 cause of acquired heart disease in UK children!

Kawasaki Disease - what's the issue?

Awareness of Kawasaki Disease is low and it is often mistaken for other common childhood illnesses, delaying treatment. Children who are treated later or not treated at all are more likely to get lifelong damage to their heart. 39% of babies (under 1 year) treated for Kawasaki Disease have serious heart problems and 28% of all diagnosed children have some heart damage. A few children each year will die from Kawasaki Disease.

Diagnosing children of Black African or Black Caribbean heritage can be difficult as some of the symptoms like rash and reddened hands or feet can appear differently, or be less visible, making them more difficult to spot. The treatment for Kawasaki Disease may work less well for children of African or Caribbean heritage* leading to a higher risk of lasting heart damage, making quick diagnosis SO important.

We need everyone to know Kawasaki Disease as early diagnosis and treatment can prevent heart damage**.

Kawasaki Disease - how common is it?

There are currently around 1,000 children taken into hospital with Kawasaki Disease in the UK each year, but this number is rising.

Around 100 children of Black African or Black Caribbean heritage are affected by Kawasaki Disease in the UK each year, making them two and a half times more likely than expected to be affected.***

Kawasaki Disease? Remember TEMPERs

Children with Kawasaki Disease are characteristically irritable!

If a child has a **PERSISTENT FEVER** and two or more of these symptoms **THINK KAWASAKI DISEASE!**

5 days of fever? **THINK Kawasaki Disease**



Temperature - **Persistent high fever**



Erythema - reddened hands and feet with swelling



Mouth - dry, sore mouth, cracked lips, 'strawberry tongue'



Pace - **Treat early** to reduce potential heart damage



Eyes - bloodshot, non-sticky conjunctivitis



Rash



Swollen glands in neck, often just one side

What can I do?

Donating blood can protect children’s hearts from Kawasaki Disease

The main treatment for Kawasaki Disease is Immunoglobulin, made from donated blood. This helps stop the damage to the blood vessels of the heart which Kawasaki Disease can cause. If YOU donate blood YOU'LL be helping to protect children's hearts!

To find out how or where to donate blood visit www.blood.co.uk

Know the symptoms!



“My daughter was affected by Kawasaki Disease when she was 4 years old. Knowing the symptoms is really important

for all parents. Remember, they might not appear all at once and not all children will have all symptoms. Remember too that symptoms may appear differently or be less visible in children of Black African or Black Caribbean heritage. If your child has a PERSISTENT FEVER for 5 DAYS or more with two or more of these symptoms, THINK Kawasaki Disease.”

Keisha, Parent & Societi Supporter



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