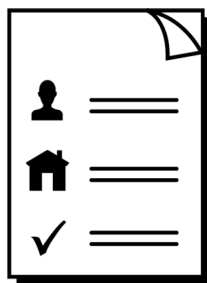


About childhood onset heart disease



Easy Read

About this fact sheet



This fact sheet is from HeartKids.

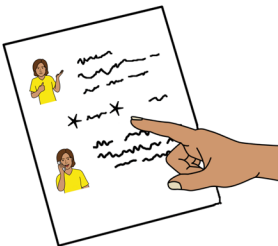


This fact sheet is written in a way that is easy to understand.



You can read more information about HeartKids on our website.

Visit heartkids.org.au



We add a star before and after ***hard words***. Then we explain what the words mean.

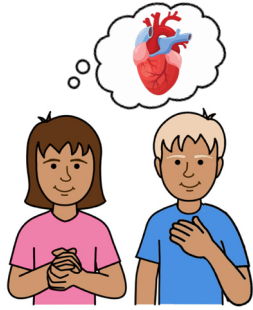


You can ask someone to help you read and understand this fact sheet.



Contact information is at the end of this fact sheet.

Childhood onset heart disease



We help people with

childhood onset heart disease or COHD.



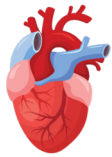
COHD means a ***heart condition*** that starts

- before you are born

or



- when you are young.

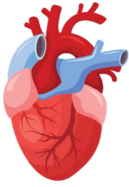


A heart condition means your heart works differently to the way it should.

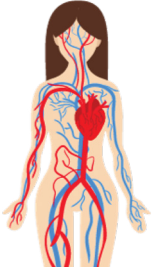


Most children with COHD grow up to live normal lives.

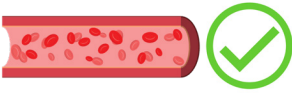
How a healthy heart works



Your heart is a muscle.



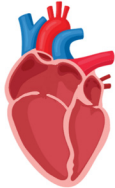
Your heart pumps blood through your body.



Blood carries oxygen and nutrients around your body to keep you healthy.



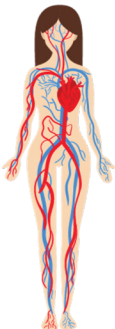
Your heart has 4 parts.



Each part does a different job.

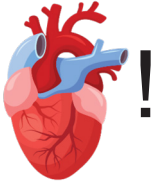


The right side gets blood from your body and pumps it through your lungs to fill it with oxygen.



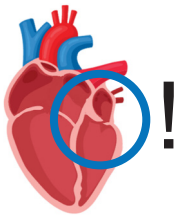
The left side gets this blood and sends it around your body.

COHD can be different types of heart problems.



For example, problems with

- the heart



- the heart ***valves***
 - valves are flaps that make blood flow the right way



- ***blood vessels***
 - blood vessels carry blood to and from the heart.

COHD can be

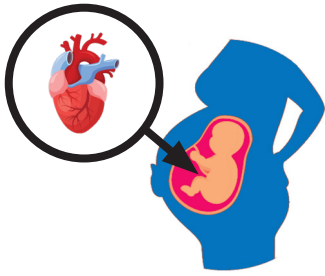


- ***congenital***
 - congenital means the heart disease starts before birth

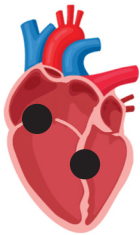


- ***acquired***
 - acquired means the heart disease starts after birth.

Heart disease before birth

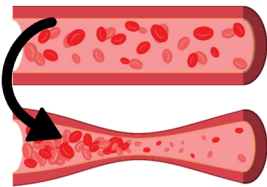


Congenital heart disease happens when a baby's heart does not grow properly before it is born.



Congenital heart disease can be

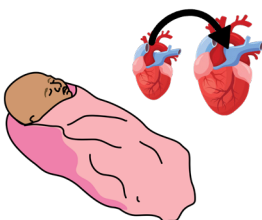
- holes in the heart
 - this can affect how your body gets oxygen



- ***obstructed*** blood flow
 - obstructed means the blood vessels or valves might be too thin for the blood to flow through



- ***abnormal*** blood vessels or heart valves
 - abnormal means the blood vessels or heart valves have not grown properly



- a heart that has not grown to its full size at birth.

There might be more than 1 problem.

How does heart disease happen before birth?



No one knows why most congenital heart disease happens.

Some reasons might be



- ***genetics***

- genetics means parents pass a health condition on to the baby in pregnancy



- the mother or baby gets sick in pregnancy.

Can a child with congenital heart disease get help?



Some children with congenital heart disease do **not** need treatment or help from a doctor.



Sometimes congenital heart disease is serious and the child will need 1 or more operations.

Heart disease after birth



Acquired heart disease can start

- after a child is born

or



- during childhood.

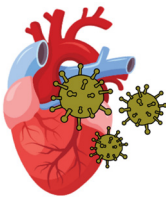


Sometimes the heart disease starts after a child has been sick.

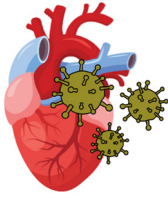


The 2 main types of acquired heart disease in children are

- ***rheumatic heart disease***



- ***Kawasaki disease***.



Rheumatic heart disease is when an infection damages the heart valves.



People with rheumatic heart disease may need monthly treatment to stop it from getting worse.



They may also need to have an operation.



Kawasaki disease makes the blood vessels get bigger or thicker.

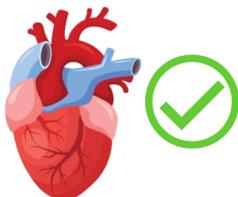


It mostly affects children under 5 years old.



Most children who get treatment early

- get better
- have no heart damage.





More information

For more information or support contact HeartKids.

Call 1800 432 785

You can contact us from 9 am to 5 pm
Monday to Friday.

Website heartkids.org.au

RHDAustralia

Support for Rheumatic heart disease.

Website rhdaustralia.org.au

KD Foundation

Support for Kawasaki disease.

Website kdfoundation.org.au

Help to speak and listen



If you need help to speak or listen, the National Relay Service can help you make a call.



Call 1800 555 660



Website accesshub.gov.au/nrs-helpdesk

Help in your language



If you need help with other languages, contact the Translating and Interpreting Service.



Call 131 450



Website tisnational.gov.au

Easy Read Australia created this Easy Read document in January 2024 using Picture Communication Symbols (PCS). PCS and Boardmaker are trademarks of Tobii Dynavox LLC. All rights reserved. Used with permission. You must ask for permission to use the images in this document. For more information, please visit easyreadaust.com.au