



Ten Facts About Pediatric Cardiomyopathy

1. **Cardiomyopathy is a chronic disease of the heart muscle that affects the heart's ability to pump blood.** The disease can present in different forms and may, in severe cases, lead to heart failure and/or sudden death.
2. **There are five different forms of cardiomyopathy.** The different forms include: dilated (DCM), hypertrophic (HCM), restrictive (RCM), arrhythmogenic right ventricular (ARVC) cardiomyopathy, and left ventricular non-compaction cardiomyopathy (LVNC).
3. **Cardiomyopathy can affect any child.** Cardiomyopathy can occur in any child regardless of age, race, gender, or socioeconomic status.
4. **Symptoms vary among the different forms of cardiomyopathy.** Symptoms may vary from none to severe. Common signs include difficulty breathing, fatigue, exercise intolerance, fainting, dizziness or light-headedness, chest pain, heart palpitations, and swelling in certain parts of the body.
5. **Cardiomyopathy can either be inherited genetically or acquired through a viral infection or cancer chemotherapy.** The genetic and molecular mechanism of the disease is still not well understood in children, and up to 75 percent of those diagnosed do not have a known disease cause.
6. **Cardiomyopathy is a chronic disease without a cure.** While there are medications and surgical procedures that may improve a child's quality of life, the damaged heart cannot be repaired. A heart transplant may be necessary if the heart continues to weaken and medical management is no longer effective.
7. **Cardiomyopathy remains a leading cause of heart transplants in children.** Cardiomyopathies result in some of the worst pediatric cardiac outcomes; nearly 40 percent of children experiencing symptoms end up receiving a heart transplant or dying.
8. **When cardiomyopathy is undiagnosed, there is a higher risk of sudden cardiac arrest, especially among young athletes.** Every year, more than 7,000 children under the age of 18 in the United States will have a sudden cardiac arrest. Knowing the symptoms of cardiomyopathy and your family's cardiac history can help to prevent premature death.
9. **Many children with cardiomyopathy face activity restrictions and psychosocial issues related to living with the disease.** A diagnosis usually results in more frequent doctor visits, daily medication and possibly surgical interventions. Other modifications include dietary adjustments, restriction from sports, and school accommodations.
10. **Treating pediatric cardiomyopathy is complicated.** It is a variable disease with multiple causes, and a specialized medical team and treatment plan is needed based on the type of cardiomyopathy, a child's age, and his/her heart status.

For more information about pediatric cardiomyopathy, visit childrenscardiomyopathy.org.