



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 multiple forms of cardiomyopathy.** Each form affects the heart muscle differently: dilated (DCM), hypertrophic (HCM), restrictive (RCM), arrhythmogenic (ACM) cardiomyopathy, and noncompaction cardiomyopathy (NCCM).
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 in children vary and include fatigue, chest pain or shortness of breath with exercise, irregular or rapid heartbeat, dizziness or fainting, and poor appetite and difficulty gaining weight.
5. **Cardiomyopathy can be inherited genetically or acquired through a viral infection or cancer chemotherapy.** While cardiomyopathy can be inherited, many children do not have a known genetic cause.
6. **Cardiomyopathy is a chronic disease without a cure.** While there are medications and surgical procedures to treat symptoms, the damaged heart cannot be repaired. A heart transplant may be necessary if the heart continues to weaken and cannot pump effectively.
7. **Cardiomyopathy remains a leading cause of heart transplants in children.** Cardiomyopathy can progress to heart failure, and is a leading cause of heart transplantation in children.
8. **When cardiomyopathy is undiagnosed, there is a higher risk of sudden cardiac arrest, especially among young athletes.** Every year, nearly 7,000 children under the age of 18 will experience sudden cardiac arrest. Knowing the symptoms of cardiomyopathy and your family's cardiac history can help prevent premature death.
9. **Many children with cardiomyopathy face activity restrictions and psychosocial issues.** A diagnosis usually results in more frequent doctor visits, daily medication, and possibly surgical interventions. It can lead to depression and anxiety during the teen years.
10. **Treating pediatric cardiomyopathy is complicated.** It is a variable disease with multiple causes, and an individualized treatment plan is determined by the type of cardiomyopathy, a child's age, and their heart status.

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