



The Facts about Congenital Heart Disease in New Zealand

- ♥ Every week 12 babies are born in New Zealand with a heart defect; a smaller number will develop a heart condition as a result of Rheumatic Fever, cardiomyopathy or Kawasaki Disease
- ♥ More than half of these conditions are serious enough to require treatment through medication or surgery – sadly some cannot be repaired
- ♥ A congenital heart condition is the most common serious birth abnormality in New Zealand needing ongoing medical intervention
- ♥ The severity of conditions can range from a simple hole in the heart to highly complex combination of conditions
- ♥ A disproportionate number of Maori and Pacific Island children suffer from acquired heart disease – often as a result of Rheumatic Fever
- ♥ Heart disease is the leading cause of death in young children
- ♥ Childhood heart disease takes more lives than all other childhood diseases combined
- ♥ Every year 450 children will have open heart surgery in New Zealand
- ♥ 70% of all heart surgery involves stopping the child's heart
- ♥ 1,000 children a year are treated at Auckland's Paediatric Cardiac Unit
- ♥ Auckland's Paediatric Cardiac Unit is the only Unit in New Zealand. (For nearly 70% of heart families' treatment for their child will mean leaving their homes, jobs, family members and support networks)
- ♥ Due to medical breakthroughs, over 90% of children born with heart defects are now expected to live to adulthood, meaning HCNZ has been able to widen the scope of services provided to better accommodate these new Heart Adults
- ♥ These Heart Adults need specialist Congenital Heart Cardiologists and Surgeons. Their physiology and needs are quite different from patients with coronary heart disease
- ♥ Patients born with more complex problems face a high risk of developing new heart problems as they age
- ♥ There is a need for teens living with CHD to be educated around the need for ongoing care, heart infections, pregnancy issues, contraceptive options and the need to avoid drugs and alcohol