



Who is Heart Children New Zealand?

Every week in New Zealand, 12 babies are born with a heart defect. There are 10,000 New Zealand children living with a heart condition. There is not a day goes by that a child does not undergo open heart surgery at Auckland's Paediatric Heart Unit, or new parents face the prospect of caring for a chronically ill child. For many of these children having heart defects means extended and regular periods in hospital for corrective surgeries and procedures, ongoing medication, tests and the possibility of further surgery, further complications.

Heart Children NZ is the only organisation in New Zealand dedicated to providing life long support for all those affected by the world's most common birth defect. We believe that no child, teenager or parent should face childhood heart disease alone. That is why we provide practical and emotional assistance, specialised equipment, advocacy, education, information and friendship to heart children, and their families, in the hospital environment and when they return home.

The facts about childhood heart conditions:

- The term congenital heart defect refers to an abnormality in the heart present at birth.
- ***Heart disease is the leading cause of death in young children.**
- **Every week 12 babies are born in New Zealand with a heart defect;** a smaller number will develop a heart condition through rheumatic fever, cardiomyopathy or Kawasaki disease.
- More than half of the heart defects 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.
- ***Childhood heart disease takes more lives than all other childhood diseases combined.**
- **Every year 450 open heart surgeries will take place on New Zealand children.**
- 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 70% of heart families' treatment for their child will mean leaving their homes, jobs, family members and support networks).

*Sources – Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, Australian Bureau of Statistics, American Heart Association

Heart Children New Zealand Inc

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