

A Letter from the

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HE HEART WORKS AS A ONE-WAY STREET. The heart valves are responsible for making sure that blood flows in a forward direction to pump blood throughout the body. It's when the valve is damaged that causes leaks and engorging the heart which can then lead to heart failure. This valve dysfunction is Valvular Heart Disease (VHD).

The causes of VHD are either congenital or acquired. In Malaysia, 95% of abnormalities are due to acquired causes like rheumatic fever. If not treated well, this fever causes immune complications which damages the heart valves. This is when VHD occurs and only starts to show VHD symptoms between 5-20 years after the initial fever. If your child has had a rheumatic fever, best to follow up with yearly checks.

IJN is well-equipped with basic and advanced diagnostic tests such as echocardiography, electrocardiogram, cardiac catheterization, transesophageal echocardiogram, and 3D echocardiography that can draw accurate results. Upon analysis, the next step is surgery. There are two options – repair or replace.

IJN is one of the world's leading centers in repairing heart valves so you can be rest assured you are in good hands. Repairing heart valves is ideal as it has a lower risk of infection, preserves valve strength and function, and decreases the need to take warfarin for the rest of your life. In severe cases, the tissue may no longer be fit for repair hence the valve would need to be replaced.

Should replacement be needed, there are options to consider. Here in IJN, we have minimally-invasive options like Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI), keyhole surgeries, and MitraClip. Of course, these minimally invasive treatments have a lower risk of infection, less trauma to the chest and heart tissue, and shorter recovery time. **However keep in mind that our ultimate goal is for you to have the best possible outcome which is a long, healthy, and the heartiest quality of life.**

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