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# Blue girl needs to be in pink of health



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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Wong Soon Xum, 7, is a curious and inquisitive girl, her eyes constantly on the lookout for something interesting.

However, she would be more active if she had not been born with multiple heart conditions.

Diagnosed with a single ventricle or heart chamber, tricuspid atresia and pulmonary stenosis, her tricuspid and pulmonary valves get constricted, resulting in her turning blue.

Her father, teacher Wong Foong Hee, 34, said his wife, Hee Yoke Ping, 36, had a normal pregnancy and Soon Xum was delivered naturally in a private hospital.

"She weighed 2.74kg and it was only on the second day that the doctor detected a heart murmur.

"We were referred to Geneagles Medical Centre, Ampang, where she was diagnosed with the condition."

When she was 2, she had a Glenn shunt operation to bypass cardiac circulation and allow blood to get to the lungs for oxygenation.

As a result of the blocked blood vessels to her lungs, her fingers, eyelids and lips turn blue because of a lack of oxygen.

Wong said: "She is often tired and listless and becomes breathless when she exerts herself.

"She started school this year and went for a month, but came home tired every day.

"We decided to homeschool her as she could not carry her school bag and her classroom was on the second floor."

Soon Xum needs to go for a cardiac catheterisation and a Fontan operation to direct the blood returning from the upper and lower parts of her body to the lungs and bypass her heart.



Wong Soon Xum and mother Hee Yoke Ping received RM20,000 from the AIA Have-A-Heart Fund in Kuala Lumpur recently. — NST picture by Yong Chee Choong

She underwent a RM7,000 catheterisation on June 17.

Her RM45,000 Fontan operation was postponed numerous times as she was unwell. The next one is on Sept 21.

Wong said: "She has improved a lot following the Glenn shunt operation but still suffers from poor appetite and cannot carry heavy weights and climb stairs.

"Now, she weighs only 12.5kg, which means she is underweight for

her age, and also takes a long time to recover when she falls sick."

She received RM20,000 from the AIA Have-A-Heart Fund to help defray the cost of her surgery.

Those who wish to help children with such medical conditions can send their cheques, made payable to The New Straits Times Press (M) Bhd, to: The Cashier, Finance Department/Charity Unit, The New Straits Times Press, 31 Jalan Hong, 59100 Kuala Lumpur.