



look ma!

When your child does that funny thing with his thumb, it may not be so funny after all... in fact, he could be showing signs of a potentially deadly condition. The Marfan syndrome, and related genetic disorders that weaken the connective tissues of the body, affect approximately 200,000 people in the U.S. Left untreated, they can have serious consequences, including blindness, aortic dissection (a tear in the large artery near the heart) and even death. While there is no cure for the Marfan syndrome, early diagnosis and proper treatment can allow your child to live a normal lifespan.

indicators of the Marfan syndrome include:

- * tall, thin stature with unusually long arms and legs
- * long, double-jointed fingers
- * flat feet
- * scoliosis
- * nearsightedness
- * chest bone that curves inward or outward

If you notice a combination of these physical characteristics in your child, take the first step by asking your pediatrician about further evaluation, which is necessary to make the proper diagnosis. Early detection could save your child's life. So the next time your child looks for laughs, you'll know what to look for.

For more information on evaluating your child, contact the National Marfan Foundation at 1-800-8-marfan.

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www.marfan.org