

Teenager to have giant tumor removed

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A 15-year-old Vietnamese girl will have surgery in Miami Tuesday to remove a giant tumor that has deformed her face, doctors say.

The International Kids Fund, which has been involved in raising \$107,000 for the operation, said Lai Thi Dao has one of the largest Schwannoma tumors ever reported.

"Our biggest concern is the huge number of blood vessels going into the tumor," Dr. Robert Marx, professor of surgery and chief of the division of oral and maxillofacial surgery at the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Medical Center, told ABC News. "We estimate the tumor weighs about 10 pounds, so it's like a newborn baby."

Doctors said the benign growth started as a tiny lump in her tongue but swelled to cover the lower portion of her head, The Miami Herald reported.

"Without surgery, Lai faces a life journey that will unfortunately end too soon because the rapid growth of the tumor will eventually impair her ability to breath," said Dr. Jesus Gomez, an oral and maxillofacial surgeon at the hospital.

Lai, who lives in rural Vietnam, has been without treatment for 10 years. She has never attended school and was unable to make friends her own age, the charity said.

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