

APPOINTMENT DATE:

DOCTOR'S NAME:



WHAT IS PERICARDITIS?

DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

1

BEFORE
YOUR VISIT

2

YOUR HEALTH
HISTORY

3

YOUR
SYMPTOMS

4

ASK
QUESTIONS



Make a list of key medical information or keep a personal medical record. It can help to keep an updated personal medical record. This record can include a list of any other health events you've had, results of past medical tests, and any prescription or over-the-counter medicines you're taking. This can be especially helpful if you move to a new place or change doctors.

➤ [Record your information on page 4.](#)



Document the symptoms you have been experiencing. Have you had a recurrence since your last appointment? Have you experienced any new, persistent, or worsening symptoms?

➤ [Use the Symptoms Worksheet on page 6 to record your current situation.](#)



Think about your questions. Start with the list included in this guide and think about any additional questions you want to discuss with your doctor.



Take notes and/or record the appointment. Use this Doctor Discussion Guide or a notebook to keep track of your doctor's answers and recommendations. Ask your doctor if you can record the appointment using your phone so you can reference it later. You can also bring a friend or family member with you to help you advocate, take notes, and ask questions.



Speak up. You are your best advocate. If you don't understand a test result or something your doctor says, ask them to explain it in more detail. It's ok to ask for specific tests or to see a specialist, such as a cardiologist, for a consultation.



Ask for a treatment plan. Managing recurrent pericarditis is an ongoing process. Ask your doctor about treatment options and ways to manage your disease. It's important to partner with your doctor to develop a personalized treatment plan that works for you.

2 YOUR HEALTH HISTORY

SHARE THE ISSUES AND EVENTS THAT MAY HAVE IMPACTED YOUR HEALTH IN THE PAST

✓ **Pericarditis diagnosis:** Tell your doctor if you were previously diagnosed with pericarditis.

- I have not been diagnosed with pericarditis.
- I have been diagnosed with pericarditis.
I have had _____ recurrences in the past _____ months.

✓ **Recent health events:** Tell your doctor if you have had any of the following health events prior to experiencing current symptoms.

- An infection (from a bacteria, fungus, or parasite)
- A virus (such as the flu or COVID-19)
- A heart procedure (such as a pacemaker)
- Injury to your heart or pericardium (such as from a car accident, radiation, or chemotherapy)
- Other: _____

✓ **Other impactful effects:** If your recurrent pericarditis has caused anxiety or depression, you are not alone. Individuals with recurrent pericarditis have reported that the condition can affect their emotions and quality of life.

Tell your doctor if you have recently experienced the following:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Anxiety | <input type="radio"/> Fear of your next flare | <input type="radio"/> Feelings of depression | <input type="radio"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Sleeplessness | <input type="radio"/> Interruption in your daily routine | <input type="radio"/> Missing time at work | _____ |

✓ **Other key medical information:**

3 YOUR SYMPTOMS

SHARE YOUR SYMPTOMS

✓ **Chest pain:** Tell your doctor if you are experiencing any of the following types of chest pain. Be specific. Don't just say you're experiencing chest pain—give details such as, "It gets worse when I breathe in or when I lie down."

- Intensified chest pain:** Pain that becomes worse when you cough, lie down, or inhale deeply, and becomes better when you sit up or lean forward.
- Sharp chest pain:** A stabbing or piercing pain behind the breastbone or in the left side of your chest. Sharp chest pain becomes worse when breathing in or lying down.
- Traveling chest pain:** Pain that moves from the chest into the left shoulder and neck.
- Dull chest pain:** A dull ache or pressure behind the breastbone or in the left side of your chest. It may feel like a vise that is squeezing the heart. Dull chest pain becomes worse when breathing in or lying down.

✓ **Other symptoms:** Tell your doctor if you're experiencing any of the following signs of pericarditis:

- Back, neck, or shoulder pain**
- Cough**
- Shortness of breath when lying down**
- Heart palpitations**
- Low-grade fever**
- Overall sense of weakness and fatigue**
- Anxiety**
- Swelling in the abdomen, legs, or feet**
- Other:** _____



You have important information to offer about your condition. Sharing it with your doctor will help them provide you with the best care possible. **Use the Symptoms Worksheet on page 6 to document the symptoms you've experienced in the past.**

4 ASK QUESTIONS

BE YOUR OWN BEST ADVOCATE

When seeking care for recurrent pericarditis, it is important to educate yourself about the disease and be part of the conversation. **Below are some important questions to discuss with your doctor.**

✓ **What might be causing my pericarditis (or recurrent pericarditis)?**

✓ **Are there additional diagnostic tests, such as an echocardiogram or MRI, that we should consider?**

✓ **What treatment approach do you recommend?**

✓ **When should I expect resolution of my symptoms?**

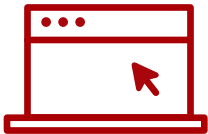
✓ **When should my symptoms resolve, and what should I do if they come back?**

✓ **What are the side effects of the recommended treatment?**

✓ **Am I at risk for long-term complications?**

✓ **Aside from medication, do you recommend any other lifestyle changes or management approaches?**

✓ **Are there any other specialists you would recommend I see as part of my disease management? (A rheumatologist? A dietitian? A therapist to help with stress?)**



To learn more about recurrent pericarditis and strengthen your ability to be your own best advocate, visit [WhatIsPericarditis.com](https://www.WhatIsPericarditis.com).