



WHAT IS RECURRENT PERICARDITIS?

PERICARDITIS IS INFLAMMATION OF THE PERICARDIUM

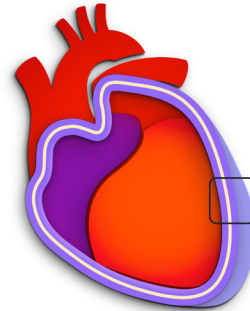
The pericardium is a fluid-filled sac that wraps around the heart and expands and contracts as the heart beats. Think of the pericardium as a water balloon that protects the heart by cushioning it from other organs in the chest.

When the pericardium is inflamed, it becomes thicker than usual. This causes the heart to rub against the pericardium, which causes chest pain.

This event is commonly described as an episode or flare.

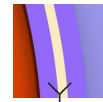
The pain caused by pericarditis occurs near the heart, just left of the breastbone. In some cases this pain occurs suddenly, while in others it comes on more gradually.

Pericarditis often resolves after 1 episode, but for some individuals it can persist or recur repeatedly.

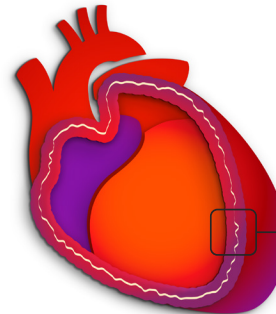


HEALTHY PERICARDIUM

Pericardial cavity filled with fluid



Two layers of pericardium



INFLAMED PERICARDIUM

Inflamed and thickened layers rub against each other and the heart



Up to 30% of individuals with pericarditis will have a recurrence within 1 year.

PERICARDITIS MAY BECOME RECURRENT PERICARDITIS

Recurrent pericarditis occurs when pericarditis symptoms last for a few days, go away for 4 to 6 weeks or longer, and then return again.

Pericardial cells that are damaged during the first episode of pericarditis release proteins that cause inflammation. These proteins affect healthy pericardial cells and trigger another episode of pericarditis. This cycle can occur again and again.


For more in-depth information on recurrent pericarditis, please visit WhatIsPericarditis.com




RECURRENT PERICARDITIS CAN BE A DEBILITATING CONDITION WITH SERIOUS HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

The most common symptom of pericarditis is chest pain. Pericarditis may also make breathing painful. This pain often feels worse when a person lies down, but hurts less when sitting up or leaning forward. In addition to chest pain, other symptoms of pericarditis include:

-  Back, neck, and 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

 Pericarditis **can limit daily life**. It can cause people to need to rest after something as simple as getting a glass of water or going to the bathroom.

 With pericarditis, it is recommended that a person's **heart rate should not go over 100 beats per minute**. Therefore, people with pericarditis may have to avoid social events and excessive activity in order to keep their heart rate down to avoid a flare



Recurrent pericarditis is like a badly scraped knee. It just needs to rest and heal. And until it rests and heals, it doesn't let you do anything.

Jill, Living With Pericarditis



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP A PERSON WITH RECURRENT PERICARDITIS

- ✓ **Learn more about the condition.** Go to [WhatsPericarditis.com](https://www.whatispericarditis.com).
- ✓ **Listen to what your friend or family member is saying.** Ask them what you can do to help or support them. For example, if they are experiencing a flare, offer to babysit or bring them a meal. Go on a grocery run, take the kids to soccer practice, or pick up the mail—even little gestures may be extremely helpful.
- ✓ **Avoid making comments like, “But you look good!” or “It could be worse.”** While your intentions may be good, it can minimize the severe pain and limitations that people with pericarditis experience.

