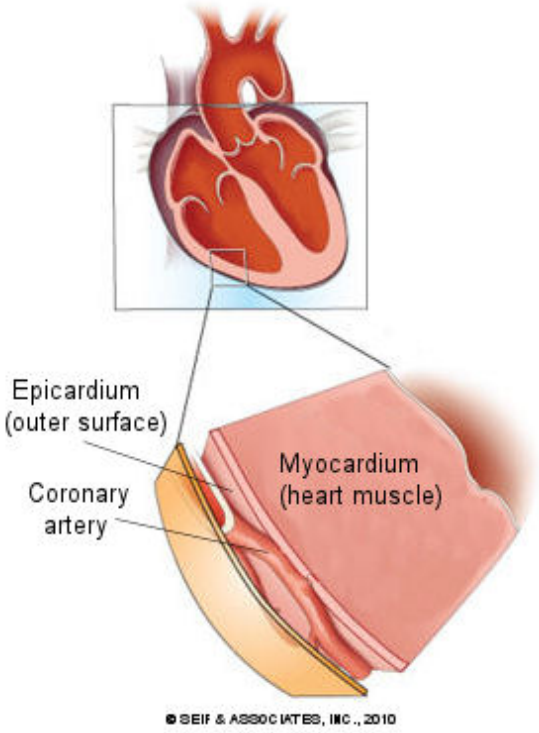
# Myocarditis,
## Inflammation of the Heart Muscle, Adults

Myocarditis is an *inflammation* (swelling) of the *myocardium* (heart muscle). It can be caused by a viral, bacterial, or fungal infection. When the heart becomes inflamed, it cannot pump as well because of the swelling. Mild cases of myocarditis may not have symptoms. Severe cases of myocarditis can cause heart failure.




### THE MOST COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS ARE:

- Chest pain.
- Shortness of breath.
- Fast or abnormal heart rhythms.
- Fatigue.
- Fluid retention or swelling in the feet/legs.
- Fever.
- Body Aches.
- Sore throat.
- Fainting.

### DIAGNOSIS

- Myocarditis may be suspected if the above symptoms have appeared after a recent infection. A physical exam and other tests may be used to confirm diagnosis. Some of these tests are:
  - Blood tests to check for signs of infection.
  - An electrocardiogram (ECG) that shows your heart's electrical patterns and rhythms.
  - A chest X-ray to look at your heart and lungs.
  - An echocardiogram which shows moving images of your heart and how well your heart is working.
  - Your caregiver also may recommend a *cardiac* (heart) catheterization. In this test a *catheter* (small tube) is inserted into a vein in your groin that is threaded into your heart. A special instrument can then remove a tiny sample of heart muscle tissue (*biopsy*). The biopsy is sent to a laboratory for analysis to see if there are signs of inflammation or infection.
- Myocarditis can be hard to diagnose because it can mimic other diseases.

### TREATMENT

Treatment of myocarditis is aimed at treating the underlying cause and may involve:

- Rest.
- Antibiotics.
- Low-salt diet.
- If you smoke, quit. Talk to your caregiver about smoking cessation.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Moderate to severe myocarditis may require more involved treatment such as:
  - Hospitalization.
  - Heart medicine such as beta blockers or ACE inhibitors. These help strengthen the heart and help it beat more regularly.
  - Diuretic medicine. Extra fluid in the body can make the heart work harder. Diuretic medicine can help get rid of the extra fluid.
  - Steroid medicine. In some cases of myocarditis, steroid medicine is used to reduce swelling.
  - LVAD (Left Ventricular Assist Device). An LVAD is a mechanical pumping device that is surgically implanted to help the heart pump. For severe cases of myocarditis, an LVAD device may be put in temporarily to help the heart pump as it heals.
  - In rare occasions, heart transplant.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these discharge instructions.
- Will monitor your condition.
- Seek immediate medical care if necessary.

Document Released: 11/09/2006 Document Re-Released: 05/06/2010
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