

10 **Critical** Questions to Ask Your Doctor if You Suspect You Have **Myocarditis**



MYOCARDITIS
FOUNDATION

Have you had COVID and are still dealing with symptoms?

Have you heard of myocarditis and now fear someone you love is affected?

Are you concerned that you may have myocarditis?

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a significant increase in myocarditis patients globally, an inflammatory disease of the heart muscle. Unfortunately, doctors and nurses may overlook the disease as its symptoms are common to other conditions, which can lead to serious health consequences.

And that is why the Myocarditis Foundation poured such care into creating this guide.

The guide provides essential information about Myocarditis, including its symptoms, causes, diagnosis, and treatment options, to give patients a better understanding of the disease. Ultimately we want to help patients understand the disease and empower them to speak to their doctors so they can get the most appropriate information for their health and the support they need to manage this condition.



Disclaimer: This guide is intended for informational purposes only. Do not use this guide for self-diagnosis. If you are concerned about any health symptoms you or a loved one is experiencing, contact your doctor as soon as possible.



WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF MYOCARDITIS?

Diagnosing and treating myocarditis is particularly challenging because of its **non-specific symptoms**. In fact, individuals may not exhibit any signs of myocarditis at all. When symptoms do manifest, they can indicate a viral infection or other cardiac issues, such as a heart attack. That being said, common symptoms of myocarditis include, but are not restricted to:

- Shortness of breath, especially after exercise or when lying down
- Fatigue
- Heart palpitations
- Chest pain or pressure
- Lightheadedness
- Swelling in the hands, legs, ankles and feet
- A sudden loss of consciousness

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, especially if aware of a prior COVID infection, **consult your doctor as soon as possible**.

For more information about the symptoms of myocarditis please see this page on our website.

<https://www.myocarditisfoundation.org/symptoms-of-coronavirus-that-may-point-to-possible-myocarditis/>

WHAT CAUSES MYOCARDITIS?

Viral infections are the leading cause of myocarditis. However, a wide range of infections, diseases, and substances may cause this condition, including:

- Bacteria
- Fungi
- Medications
- Toxins
- Ticks, spiders, and other biting/stinging insects

Autoimmune conditions, such as lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, and other disorders, have also been proven as a cause of myocarditis. In rare cases, these may lead to **giant cell myocarditis**.

Myocarditis is not contagious; a person develops it because of how their immune system reacts to the virus.

To learn more about the causes of myocarditis see this page on our website.

www.myocarditisfoundation.org/causes-of-myocarditis/

HOW IS MYOCARDITIS DIAGNOSED?

The majority of cases of myocarditis have no symptoms and go undiagnosed. However, when a person develops symptoms, common tests for myocarditis include the following:

Electrocardiogram: Electrodes on your skin record your heart's electrical activity, creating waves that show the different forces in specific heart areas.

Chest X-Ray: A chest X-ray creates an image displaying your heart, lungs, and other chest structures. It helps your doctor determine details like your heart's size and shape.

Echocardiogram: High-pitched sound waves, inaudible to humans, create images of your heart and analyze blood flow. A small device called a transducer sends these sound waves into your body, which then bounces off internal structures and returns to the transducer, generating images of the heart and its components.

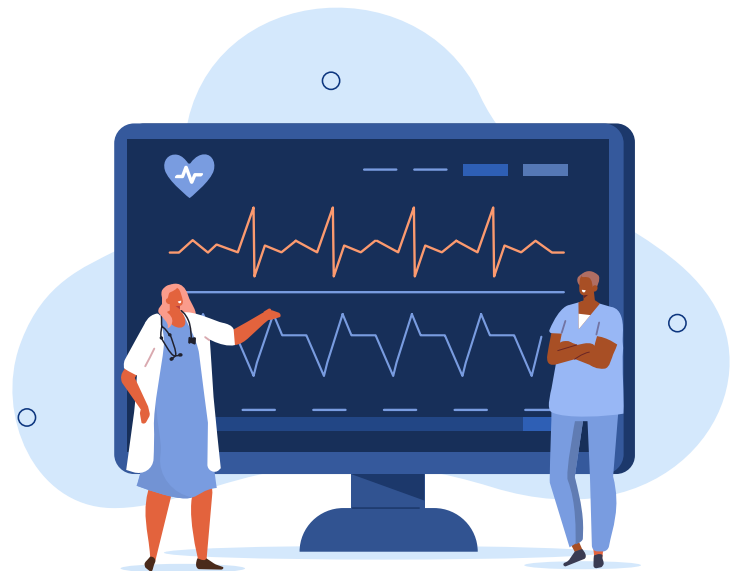
Cardiac Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Scan: MRI Scans can help diagnose myocarditis by using a magnetic field and radio waves to create images. It has become the most important non-invasive modality for the evaluation of myocarditis.

Biopsy: Sometimes, a heart biopsy, which involves taking a small tissue sample for examination, is needed to confirm the diagnosis. This is especially true for Giant Cell Myocarditis.



IS THERE A TREATMENT FOR MYOCARDITIS?

There is no specific cure for viral myocarditis, but doctors can treat its symptoms. If a patient has high blood pressure, the doctor will address that. If the heart is weaker, the doctor will prescribe appropriate heart medications depending on the case. If the patient experiences irregular heartbeats, these will be treated based on their type and frequency.



10 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR:

Now that you understand a bit about the context of the disease, these are the questions to have on hand when discussing your symptoms with your doctor.



- 1** | What are the common symptoms of myocarditis, and how do I know if I have it?
- 2** | What are the potential causes of myocarditis and why would I have it?
- 3** | What tests do I need to undergo to confirm the diagnosis of myocarditis?
- 4** | What are the treatment options available for myocarditis?
- 5** | What are the possible complications of myocarditis?
- 6** | How long will it take to recover from myocarditis?
- 7** | Can I continue my daily activities while being treated for myocarditis?
- 8** | What precautions should I take to prevent further damage to my heart?
- 9** | Are there any dietary or lifestyle changes I should make while recovering from myocarditis?
- 10** | How frequently should I follow up with my doctor during my recovery? Do I need to be re-evaluated before I go back to exercise/sports?

THERE IS GOOD NEWS

Myocarditis is a serious condition that can be life-threatening if left untreated. It is an inflammatory disease of the heart muscle, often caused by viral infections. However, many of the symptoms of myocarditis are common to other conditions, making it challenging to diagnose.

Therefore, it is essential to be aware of the symptoms and ask the right questions when speaking with your doctor to ensure an accurate diagnosis and the best possible outcome for your health. While there is no known cure for viral myocarditis, treatment is available to manage the symptoms.

The good news is that after treatment, many patients can live long and full lives, while some may need ongoing cardiovascular medication or a heart transplant.

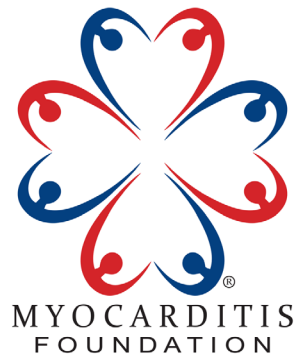
By seeking early diagnosis and treatment, patients can manage this condition successfully.

Call us today at the Myocarditis Foundation if you need help or support.

If you wish to support the efforts of the Myocarditis Foundation, we encourage you to make a donation. As a non-profit organization, we depend on contributions to fulfill our mission of financing cutting-edge myocarditis research and providing assistance to families impacted by the condition.

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