

Myocarditis (and pericarditis) information sheet (CoRiCal)

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What is myocarditis?

Myocarditis is inflammation of the heart. Pericarditis is inflammation of the lining around the heart.

There are many causes of myocarditis and pericarditis. The most common cause is a viral infection. COVID-19 can cause myocarditis and pericarditis in some people. Myocarditis and pericarditis are also rare adverse effects after having some COVID-19 vaccines.

Sometimes myocarditis and pericarditis can occur because of injuries, medicines, or health problems.

How common is myocarditis following COVID-19 vaccination?

Myocarditis and pericarditis are rare following mRNA COVID-19 vaccines (e.g. Pfizer and Moderna vaccines). When it does happen it is more common in males aged under 40 years. It is also more common after the second vaccine. Further information on myocarditis and pericarditis after COVID-19 vaccination can be found at [COVID-19 vaccines and cardiac inflammation | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care](#).

Are myocarditis and pericarditis serious?

Most people who get myocarditis or pericarditis recover completely. The severity of myocarditis and pericarditis cases is similar for Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines. A very small number of fatal cases have been reported, including in females.

Who is at increased risk of myocarditis?

Younger males have a higher risk (see above).

What are the symptoms of myocarditis and pericarditis?

Common symptoms of myocarditis are chest pain or discomfort, fast heart rate (palpitations), or shortness of breath. Other symptoms include feeling very tired or nauseous. Symptoms usually start within 1-5 days after vaccination.

The more common symptoms of pericarditis include chest pain which may be sharp or worse when lying down. This chest pain may get better if you sit up and lean forward.

What should I do if I think I have myocarditis or pericarditis?

If you think you (or your child) has myocarditis or pericarditis, you should call your GP. They will ask questions and check your heart. They may refer you for more tests or send you to the emergency department.

How is myocarditis treated?

People with myocarditis may be admitted to hospital as a precaution and for monitoring. Most people with myocarditis have mild symptoms that go away in a short time.

How can I reduce my risk of myocarditis following a COVID vaccine?

You should only have the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine when it's been at least 8 weeks after the first dose.

Should I have a second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine if I got myocarditis after my first COVID-19 vaccine?

If a doctor confirmed you had myocarditis and/or pericarditis due to a COVID-19 vaccine you should discuss further COVID vaccines with a cardiologist or specialist immunisation service. They will consider the best options for your situation.

Where can I find some more good quality information on myocarditis?

The Australian government (<https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/covid-19-vaccines>) [COVID-19 vaccines and cardiac inflammation](#) | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care

The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance [COVID-19 vaccines: Frequently asked questions](#) | NCIRS