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|  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  |  |  | |  | **Pericarditis** |  | | http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/bl1.gif |  | http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/br1.gif | | **Search treatments and conditions**  Top of Form    Bottom of Form |

[Signs, symptoms and indicators](http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/cond/C633033.html#H1) | [Conditions that suggest it](http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/cond/C633033.html#H2) | [Contributing risk factors](http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/cond/C633033.html#H3) | [Recommendations](http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/cond/C633033.html#H7)

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|  | **Pericarditis is inflammation of the pericardium, which is the thin sac that surrounds the heart and the roots of the great vessels. There is normally a small amount of fluid between the inner and outer layers of the pericardium. When the pericardium becomes inflamed, the amount of fluid between its two layers increases, compressing the heart and interfering with its ability to function properly.**   Typically, the cause of pericarditis is unknown, but may include these causes:   * a viral, bacterial or fungal infection * heart attack * [cancer](http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/cond/C633033.html#G112) spreading from a nearby tumor in the lung, breast or the blood * sometimes it may be a secondary symptom of [rheumatoid arthritis](http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/cond/C633033.html#G885), lupus (systemic lupus erythematosus), or [kidney failure](http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/cond/C633033.html#G1229)   How is pericarditis treated? Pericarditis is usually treated with analgesics or [anti-inflammatory](http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/cond/C633033.html#G52) drugs to relieve pain. When excess fluid seriously affects the heart's action, it may be drawn off with a needle. In some cases, surgery may be required.  [Acute](http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/cond/C633033.html#G6) inflammatory pericarditis usually lasts two to six weeks. About 20% of pericarditis patients have a recurrence within months or, sometimes, years later. Each recurrence tends to be less severe until the episodes finally stop. |  |  |
| http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/bl1.gif |  | | http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/br1.gif |

http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/20pix.gifSigns, symptoms & indicators of Pericarditis:

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|  | |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Symptoms - Cardiovascular** | [http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/1plus.gif](http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/cond/C633033.html#K)  **Pain in chest or left side**   **Counter-indicators:** [http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/1minus.gif](http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/cond/C633033.html#K)  **Asbsence of chest or left sided pain** | | **Symptoms - Gas-Int - General** | [http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/2plus.gif](http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/cond/C633033.html#K)  **Difficulty swallowing** | | **Symptoms - Metabolic** | [http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/2plus.gif](http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/cond/C633033.html#K)  **Moderate/mild unexplained fevers**  [http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/1plus.gif](http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/cond/C633033.html#K)  **Having a slight/having a moderate/having a high fever** | | **Symptoms - Respiratory** | [http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/2plus.gif](http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/cond/C633033.html#K)  **Chest pain when breathing out or chest pain when breathing in or chest pain when breathing**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/20pix.gifhttp://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/Why.gif | The most common symptom of pericarditis is chest pain. The pain is predominantly felt below the breastbone (sternum) and/or below the ribs on the left side of the chest and, occasionally, in the upper back or neck. Breathing causes the lungs and heart to move in the chest and rub against the irritated pericardium, worsening the pain. Pain may worsen when patients lie down and may improve when they sit up and lean forward. Changes in position can increase or decrease pressure on and irritation of the inflamed pericardium. | | |  |
| http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/bl.gif |  | http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/br.gif |

http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/20pix.gifConditions that suggest Pericarditis:

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| http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/bl.gif |  | http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/br.gif |

http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/20pix.gifRisk factors for Pericarditis:

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| http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/bl.gif |  | http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/br.gif |

http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/20pix.gifRecommendations for Pericarditis:

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|  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Drug** | [http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/1tick.gif](http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/cond/C633033.html#K)  [**Conventional Drugs / Information**](http://boston.lti.cs.cmu.edu/Services/clueweb12_render/getresource.cgi/renderpage.cgi?id=clueweb12-1106wb-05-12460&c=false)   |  |  | | --- | --- | | http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/20pix.gifhttp://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/Why.gif | In a study of nine patients with recurrent pericarditis resistant to traditional therapy it was found that all had a positive response with colchicine at a dose of one mg/day. These patients had experienced relapses despite treatment with indomethocin, acetylsalicylic acid, or prednisone. With colchicine treatment prednisone was discontinued in all patients between 2 to 6 weeks. The colchicine was continued. A mean follow-up of 24.3 months showed no recurrences in  any patient. These results are encouraging but due to the small sample in this study larger trials are warranted. [*Circulation, 1990;82: pp.1117-1120*] | | |  |
| http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/bl.gif |  | http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/br.gif |

**KEY**

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| http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/1plus.gif | http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/20pix.gif | Weak or unproven link |
| http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/2plus.gif | http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/20pix.gif | Strong or generally accepted link |
| http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/3plus.gif | http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/20pix.gif | Proven definite or direct link |
| http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/1minus.gif | http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/20pix.gif | Weakly counter-indicative |
| http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/3minus.gif | http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/20pix.gif | Very strongly or absolutely counter-indicative |
| http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/1tick.gif | http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/20pix.gif | May do some good |

http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/10pix.gif

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|  | http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/openquote.gifPeace on the outside comes from knowing God on the inside. ~Author Unknown http://www.digitalnaturopath.com/images/closequote.gif |  |
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**GLOSSARY**   
  
**Acute:**  An illness or symptom of sudden onset, which generally has a short duration.   
  
**Anti-inflammatory:**  Reducing inflammation by acting on body mechanisms, without directly acting on the cause of inflammation, e.g., glucocorticoids, aspirin.   
  
**Asthma:**  A lung disorder marked by attacks of breathing difficulty, wheezing, coughing, and thick mucus coming from the lungs. The episodes may be triggered by breathing foreign substances (allergens) or pollutants, infection, vigorous exercise, or emotional stress.   
  
**Cancer:**  Refers to the various types of malignant neoplasms that contain cells growing out of control and invading adjacent tissues, which may metastasize to distant tissues.   
  
**Cardiovascular:**  Pertaining to the heart and blood vessels.   
  
**Celiac Disease:**  (Gluten sensitivity) A digestive disease that damages the small intestine and interferes with absorption of nutrients from food. People who have celiac disease cannot tolerate a protein called gluten. Common **symptoms** include diarrhea, increased appetite, bloating, weight loss, irritability and fatigue. Gluten is found in wheat (including spelt, triticale, and kamut), rye, barley and sometimes oats.   
  
**Chronic Renal Failure:**  (CRF) Irreversible, progressive impaired kidney function. The early stage, when the kidneys no longer function properly but do not yet require dialysis, is known as **Chronic Renal Insufficiency** (CRI). CRI can be difficult to diagnose, as symptoms are not usually apparent until kidney disease has progressed significantly. Common **symptoms** include a frequent need to urinate and swelling, as well as possible anemia, fatigue, weakness, headaches and loss of appetite. As the disease progresses, other symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, bad breath and itchy skin may develop as toxic metabolites, normally filtered out of the blood by the kidneys, build up to harmful levels. Over time (up to 10 or 20 years), CRF generally progresses from CRI to **End-Stage Renal Disease** (ESRD, also known as **Kidney Failure**). Patients with ESRD no longer have kidney function adequate to sustain life and require dialysis or kidney transplantation. Without proper treatment, ESRD is fatal.   
  
**Electrocardiogram:**  A test that shows a tracing of the electrical conduction of the heart.   
  
**Hemolytic Anemia:**  Anemia caused by excessive destruction of red blood cells.   
  
**Nervous System:**  A system in the body that is comprised of the brain, spinal cord, nerves, ganglia and parts of the receptor organs that receive and interpret stimuli and transmit impulses to effector organs.   
  
**Rheumatoid Arthritis:**  A long-term, destructive connective tissue disease that results from the body rejecting its own tissue cells (autoimmune reaction).   
  
**Tachycardia:**  Excessively rapid heart rate.   
  
**Tracheobronchitis:**  Inflammation of the mucous membrane of the trachea and bronchi.