



[Home](#) → [Health Topics](#) → Pericardial Disorders

URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/pericardialdisorders.html>

Pericardial Disorders


The pericardium is a membrane, or sac, that surrounds your heart. It holds the heart in place and helps it work properly. Problems with the pericardium include:

- Pericarditis - an inflammation of the sac. It can be from a virus or other infection, a heart attack, heart surgery, other medical conditions, injuries, and certain medicines.
- Pericardial effusion - the buildup of fluid in the sac
- Cardiac tamponade - a serious problem in which buildup of fluid in the sac causes problems with the function of the heart


Symptoms of pericardial problems include chest pain, rapid heartbeat, and difficulty breathing. Fever is a common symptom of acute pericarditis. Your doctor may use a physical exam, imaging tests, and heart tests to make a diagnosis. Treatment depends on the cause.

NIH: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Start Here

- Heart Inflammation [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/heart-inflammation>]  (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/es/salud/inflamacion-cardiaca>]

Diagnosis and Tests

- Heart Health Tests: MedlinePlus Health Topic [<https://medlineplus.gov/hearthealthtests.html>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/hearthealthtests.html>]

Related Issues

- Myocarditis and Pericarditis after mRNA COVID-19 Vaccination [<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/myocarditis.html>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Specifics

- Acute Pericarditis [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/heart-and-blood-vessel-disorders/pericardial-disease-and-myocarditis/acute-pericarditis>] (Merck & Co., Inc.)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/es-us/hogar/trastornos-del-coraz%C3%B3n-y-los-vasos-sangu%C3%ADneos/enfermedad-peric%C3%A1rdica-del-pericardio-y-miocarditis/pericarditis-aguda>]
- Chronic Pericarditis [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/heart-and-blood-vessel-disorders/pericardial-disease-and-myocarditis/chronic-pericarditis>] (Merck & Co., Inc.)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/es-us/hogar/trastornos-del-coraz%C3%B3n-y-los-vasos-sangu%C3%ADneos/enfermedad-peric%C3%A1rdica-del-pericardio-y-miocarditis/pericarditis-cr%C3%B3nica>]
- Dressler Syndrome [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dresslers-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20371811?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/dresslers-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20371811?p=1>]


Pericardial Effusion [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/pericardial-effusion/symptoms-causes/syc-20353720?p=1] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)


Also in Spanish [https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/pericardial-effusion/symptoms-causes/syc-20353720?p=1]

• Pericarditis [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/pericarditis/symptoms-causes/syc-20352510?p=1] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

• Pericarditis [https://www.texasheart.org/heart-health/heart-information-center/topics/pericarditis-2/] (Texas Heart Institute)
Also in Spanish [https://www.texasheart.org/heart-health/heart-information-center/topics/pericarditis/]

Clinical Trials

• ClinicalTrials.gov: Pericardial Effusion [https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Pericardial+Effusion%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec]  (National Institutes of Health)

• ClinicalTrials.gov: Pericarditis [https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Pericarditis%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

• Article: Autoimmune Pericarditis: Diagnosis and New Therapeutics. [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40665038]


• Article: Factors associated with pericardial effusion development and persistence in systemic sclerosis:... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40658121]

• Article: Incremental Diagnostic Value of Computed Tomography Attenuation in Differentiating Malignant Pericardial... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40613507]

• Pericardial Disorders -- see more articles [https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Pericarditis%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+OR+%22Pericardial+Effusion%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+OR+%22Cardiac+Tamponade%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+]

Find an Expert

• American Heart Association [https://www.heart.org/en/]

• National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute [https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/] 

Patient Handouts

• Cardiac tamponade [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000194.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000194.htm]

• Pericardiocentesis [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003872.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003872.htm]

• Pericarditis [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000182.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000182.htm]

• Pericarditis - after heart attack [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000166.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000166.htm]

• Pericarditis - constrictive [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001103.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001103.htm]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Cardiac tamponade [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000194.htm>]

Pericardial fluid culture [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003720.htm>]

Pericardial fluid Gram stain [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003719.htm>]

Pericardiocentesis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003872.htm>]

Pericarditis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000182.htm>]

Pericarditis - after heart attack [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000166.htm>]

Pericarditis - constrictive [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001103.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Heart Attack [<https://medlineplus.gov/heartattack.html>]

Heart Diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/heartdiseases.html>]

Heart Health Tests [<https://medlineplus.gov/hearthealthtests.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Pericardial Disorders* is the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute [<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/>]

MedlinePlus links to health information from the National Institutes of Health and other federal government agencies. MedlinePlus also links to health information from non-government Web sites. See our disclaimer [<https://medlineplus.gov/disclaimers.html>] about external links and our quality guidelines [<https://medlineplus.gov/criteria.html>] .

The information on this site should not be used as a substitute for professional medical care or advice. Contact a health care provider if you have questions about your health.

[Learn how to cite this page](#)

