

Post-pericardiotomy syndrome

What is post-pericardiotomy syndrome (PPS)?

The heart has a sac around it called the pericardium. After heart surgery, this sac can get inflamed. Fluid can then build up. This is called post-pericardiotomy syndrome (PPS).

What causes PPS?

- Children can develop PPS after surgery near or on the heart.
- It sometimes happens when the pericardium is touched during surgery.
- PPS can also happen in children who do not have open-heart surgery.
- It is not caused by an infection and does not mean the heart muscle has been damaged.

What are the possible symptoms?

Your child may have 1 or more of these:

- Fever higher than 100.5°F
- Chest pain
- More tired than normal
- Crankier or fussier than normal
- Body aches and soreness (flu-like symptoms)
- Less appetite (does not want to eat as much as normal)
- Stomach pains
- Nausea and vomiting (throwing up)
- Skin color that turns pale, gray or blue

What tests could my child have?

Your child could have a chest X-ray and echocardiogram (echo) to see if they have PPS. These tests show doctors if there is fluid around the heart.

What is the usual treatment for PPS?

- Your child's doctor will treat PPS with medicine to reduce the inflamed area (sac) of the heart. The doctor will let you know how long your child should take the medicine.
- Your child's doctor will talk with you about follow-up care for your child.

When should I call Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Cardiology?

Call Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Cardiology if your child:

- Has a temperature higher than 100.5°F.
- Is more tired than normal.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Post-pericardiotomy syndrome, continued

- Has chest pain.
- Is crankier or fussier than normal.
- Has body aches and soreness.
- Has a sudden drop in activity level (does not want to move or play as much as normal).
- Has a sudden change to their appetite (does not want to eat as much as normal).
- Has pale, gray or blue color changes to their skin.

Also call if you have any questions or concerns about how your child looks or feels.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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