

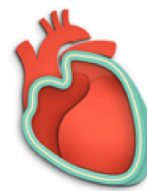
# FACTS ABOUT PERICARDITIS

If you know someone with pericarditis or recurrent pericarditis, this fact sheet will help you understand the condition, what they experience, and how you can support them. **If you have pericarditis or recurrent pericarditis yourself, consider reading and sharing this guide.**

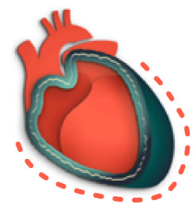
## What is pericarditis?

Pericarditis is a condition where the thin membrane that surrounds the heart (the pericardium) becomes inflamed or swollen. **An episode (also called a “flare”) of pericarditis may occur once and resolve. When a flare happens again more than four weeks after the first one goes away, it is known as recurrent pericarditis.**

HEALTHY PERICARDIUM



INFLAMED PERICARDIUM



## Pericarditis symptoms

### Main symptom:



Chest pain that feels worse when breathing in or lying down

### Other symptoms include:



Back, neck, or shoulder pain



Shortness of breath when lying down



Low-grade fever



Feeling anxious



Cough



Heart palpitations



Overall sense of weakness and fatigue



Swelling in the abdomen, legs, or feet

## Recurrent pericarditis

When another flare happens more than 4 weeks after first flare goes away it is called recurrent pericarditis, which is a chronic disease, meaning it can last for many years. The repeated flares are caused by the immune system attacking the pericardium. Because an attack of pericarditis causes inflammation, it can lead to further immune system response and more inflammation. With every flare, the risk of having another flare goes up, while the time between flares goes down.



**“With the right knowledge and support, you can keep living a full life with recurrent pericarditis.”**

**Henrik Lundqvist**

NHL Hall-of-Famer, living with recurrent pericarditis



# HOW TO HELP SOMEONE WITH RECURRENT PERICARDITIS

Up to 1 in 3 people with a first episode of pericarditis will experience recurrent pericarditis within 18 months of their first flare; your friend or family member may be one of them.

Recurrent pericarditis can affect each person differently, so it's crucial to ask about their individual experience and what they might need help with. Once you understand their specific needs, you can offer practical support.



## Support at home

Some helpful offers might include watching their children, cooking a meal, or going on a grocery run. Even small gestures can be extremely beneficial, such as bringing them a glass of water or simply keeping them company.



## Support with medical appointments

Doctor visits can feel overwhelming for someone with recurrent pericarditis. Here are some ways you can assist:

- **Track Symptoms:** Help keep track of symptoms to share with the doctor.
- **List Questions:** Make a list of questions and concerns to discuss.
- **Organize Records:** Assist in organizing their medical records, test results, and any other relevant documents to bring to the appointment.
- **Transportation:** Offer to drive them to and from the appointment, especially if they are experiencing severe symptoms.
- **Note-Taking:** Take notes and ask questions during the appointment to help them remember what the doctor said.

[Download a guide](#) for doctor's visits to help them prepare.



"Many times when I'm in the middle of a flare, it is like I can't catch my breath."

**Carly Pearce**

Country music singer/songwriter living with recurrent pericarditis



## Stay updated and connected

Choosing to keep learning means you can offer the best possible help. Recurrent pericarditis can come with an overall feeling of fatigue and weakness, as well as feelings of anxiety or depression, so your support can make a significant difference.

Learn about a [treatment option](#) for recurrent pericarditis.

