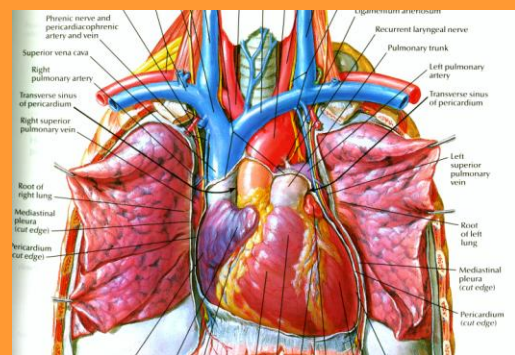
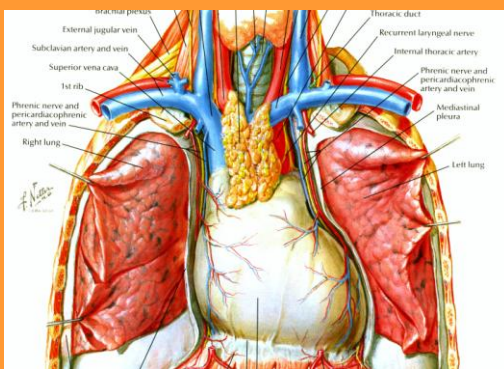


Pericarditis

Definition

A disorder caused by inflammation of the pericardium, the sac-like covering of the heart.



Causes, Incidence, and Risk Factors

- Pericarditis can be caused by
 - bacterial
 - fungal
 - viral infections

(polio, influenza, rubella, rheumatic fever and tuberculosis)

- It may be caused by systemic diseases such as

- cancer
- kidney failure
- leukaemia
- HIV infections AIDS related disorders
- autoimmune disorders
- heart attack
- myocarditis
- radiation therapy
- Immunosuppressant

- It may be a result of injury or trauma to the chest, oesophagus, or heart
- Pain occurs as a result of the inflamed pericardium rubbing against the heart. Fluid may accumulate in the pericardial sac.
- Classifications of pericarditis include bacterial pericarditis (also called purulent or infectious pericarditis), constrictive pericarditis, and post-MI pericarditis.
- Pericarditis most often affects men ages 20 to 50, usually following respiratory infections.
- It occurs in approximately 1 out of 1,000 people.

Prevention

Many cases may not be preventable.

Treat respiratory infections and other disorders promptly.

Symptoms

- **Chest pains**
 - usually relieved with sitting
 - pleuritis type: described as sharp, stabbing
 - may radiate to the neck, shoulder, back, or abdomen
 - increases with deep breathing
- **Orthopnoea**
 - the preferred position is upright, standing, or sitting
 - splinting of ribs (bending over or holding the chest) with breathing
- **Dyspnoea**
- **Dry cough**

- **Swelling**
 - Abdomen
 - Overall
 - Legs, ankles, feet (occasionally)
- **Anxiety**
- **Fatigue**
- **Fever / Chills**
- **Sweating**

Signs and Tests

- **Auscultation** reveals pericardial rubbing sound and heart sounds may be faint or distant.
- If severe, there may be
 - crackles in the lungs
 - decreased breath sounds
 - pleural effusion
- Fluid around the heart may show on:
 - chest X-ray
 - chest MRI scan
 - heart MRI or heart CT scan
 - coronary angiography
 - echocardiogram

- An ECG may show ischemic changes
- Cardiac enzymes (LDH and CPK tests) may be used to rule out acute MI (heart attack) as the cause of chest pain; however, mild elevations of cardiac enzymes can also occur in pericarditis.

Other tests may include:

- Blood culture or pericardial fluid culture
- FBC, may show increased WBC count
- pericardiocentesis
- ammonium ion

Treatment

- The goal of treatment is improvement of heart function. The cause must be identified and treated.
- Antibiotics
- Analgesics to relieve pain
- Diuretics to remove excess fluid.
- Aspirin, NSAIDS, or corticosteroids may be prescribed to relieve inflammation of the pericardium.
- Bedrest
- Pericardiocentesis

Prognosis

Pericarditis may be life threatening if untreated.

The outcome is good if the disorder is treated promptly.

Most people recover in 2 weeks to 3 months.

Complications

- Heart failure
- Pulmonary oedema
- Cardiac tamponade (compression of the heart by pericardial fluid)