

Patient Information **Pericarditis**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- The pericardium is a fibrous sac that surrounds the heart and provides protection. It also contains a thin amount of fluid which serves as a lubricant to allow the heart to move easily within the sac.
- Pericarditis is a condition where the sac surrounding the heart becomes inflamed leading to chest discomfort.
- This is usually caused by viral illnesses, but can be caused by any condition which causes inflammation within the body.

SYMPTOMS

- Patients will usually complain of chest discomfort and possibly even shortness of breath.
- Characteristically, the chest pain is worse with deep inspiration, lying on your back and with activity.
- Often patients feel best sitting upright and leaning forward.

DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

- Electrocardiogram (EKG)
- Echocardiogram

TREATMENT

- Often times drugs such as ibuprofen, naproxen or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are very successful at treating the condition.
- Rarely, steroids or even colchicine may be useful if non-steroidal drugs are contraindicated in a particular patient.

FOR MORE INFORMATION or to make an appointment at URMC Cardiology at Highland Hospital, please call (585) 341-6780 or visit us online at www.hIGHLANDHEART.URMC.EDU