



Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) Associated with Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

In May 2020 the New Jersey Department of Health began receiving reports of a multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) that may possibly be associated with COVID-19.

Similar cases of MIS-C have also been reported in other states and countries. These cases have been found in children and young adults who had no other infectious cause identified. There is limited information currently available about the clinical presentation but children with this syndrome may require intensive care in a hospital. MIS-C is a rare condition where different body parts can become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal organs. We do not yet know what causes MIS-C. However, we know that many children with MIS-C had the virus that causes COVID-19, or had been around someone with COVID-19. MIS-C can be serious, even deadly, but most children who were diagnosed with this condition have gotten better with medical care. However, because it is life-threatening, it is important that parents know the signs and symptoms so they can get help right away.

What are the signs and symptoms of MIS-C?

Most children have a fever (a temperature of 100.4°F or 38°C or greater) lasting several days, along with other symptoms. Other common symptoms may include:

- Irritability or sluggishness
- Abdominal pain without another explanation
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Rash
- Conjunctivitis, or red or pink eyes
- Enlarged lymph node (“gland”) on one side of the neck
- Red cracked lips or red tongue that looks like a strawberry
- Swollen hands and feet, which might also be red

When should I call my child’s doctor or seek emergency care?

You should call your child’s doctor immediately if your child becomes ill and has had continued fever. Your doctor will ask about any signs or symptoms your child has and use that information to recommend next steps. If your child is severely ill, you should go to the nearest emergency room or call 911 immediately.

Is MIS-C contagious?

MIS-C is not contagious. However, it is possible that your child has another underlying infection that may be contagious. Until more is known about this condition, hospitals that are treating children with MIS-C are taking the same precautions they take for patients with COVID-19.

Diagnosis

If a healthcare provider suspects that a child may have this syndrome, the child should be tested for the virus that causes COVID-19. This would involve a diagnostic test to see if the child is currently infected with the virus. They should also receive a serological test to see if the child has antibodies to the virus which would indicate that they had been exposed to the virus in the past or may have potentially been infected.

Treatment

There is no specific treatment for this syndrome. The child's healthcare provider should provide treatment for the symptoms as appropriate. Early treatment of patients suspected to have MIS-C may include treatment with immune globulin that is given through a vein (also known as IV, or intravenous) and steroids. Doctors may provide supportive care for symptoms (medicine and/or fluids to make your child feel better) and may use various medicines to treat inflammation. Most children who become ill will need to be treated in the hospital and some may need to be treated in the pediatric intensive care unit (ICU).

Prevention

Although it is not yet known if MIS-C is related to COVID-19, taking steps to prevent your child from being exposed to COVID-19 is important. Physical distancing from others, using face coverings, and practicing good hand hygiene, are the best ways to prevent COVID-19.

For More Information about COVID-19

Visit the New Jersey Department of Health <https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml> or covid19.nj.gov. If you have general questions about COVID-19, you may also call 2-1-1 or 1-800-962-1253.

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