



Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C)

Updated May 20, 2020

MIS-C is a severe inflammatory syndrome where pediatric patients present with features similar to Kawasaki disease and toxic shock syndrome. The condition can cause problems with the heart and other organs and may result in hospitalization.

MIS-C appears to be rare and most children who get COVID-19 will not develop MIS-C, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). However, children with this syndrome may become seriously ill. If you have any concerns about your child's health, please call your child's doctor.

What are the symptoms of MIS-C?

Symptoms of MIS-C might include persistent fever (temperature of 100.4 degrees F or 38.0 degrees C or greater), a rash or changes in skin color, red eyes or conjunctivitis, red cracked lips or red, bumpy tongue that looks like a strawberry, swollen hands and feet, abdominal pain or swollen lymph nodes.

When should I get emergency care?

Call your child's doctor and seek immediate care if your child has:

- Persistent fever for several days
- Difficulty feeding (infants) or is too sick to drink fluids
- Severe abdominal pain, diarrhea or vomiting
- Dehydration with decreased frequency of urination
- Change in skin color or appearance — becoming pale, patchy or blue, swelling
- Trouble breathing, breathing is painful or breathing very quickly
- Racing heart or chest pain
- Acting unusually sleepy, dizzy or confused

If your child is severely ill, go to the nearest emergency room or call 911 immediately.

Is MIS-C contagious?

MIS-C is not contagious, but it is possible that your child has COVID-19 or another infection that may be contagious.

Is there a treatment for MIS-C?

Children with MIS-C are being treated with therapeutic medications to support the body's immune system and inflammatory response. Children may also receive medications to protect their heart, kidneys and other organs.

How can I prevent my child from getting MIS-C?

You should take steps to prevent your child from being exposed to COVID-19. Stay home when you can, practice social distancing and wear a mask if you must go out and wash hands frequently. Children with underlying medical conditions can be at higher risk for poor outcomes of COVID-19.

For more information about COVID-19 in Maryland, visit coronavirus.maryland.gov.