Myocarditis after COVID-19 Vaccination: What Parents and Young Adults Should Know

What is myocarditis?
Myocarditis (and pericarditis) are terms to describe inflammation in or around the heart. Common symptoms include chest pain, difficulty breathing, and feeling like your heart is beating too fast. The body's immune system can often cause this inflammation in response to an infection, such as viruses.

Myocarditis is not very common and is rarely fatal.
There are less than 200,000 cases of myocarditis in the United States each year, with less than 2% ever fatal. There have been no deaths from myocarditis determined to be caused by COVID-19 vaccination in the United States.

- It is not known to be contagious
- Most cases are very mild
- Treatment is usually minimal, focused on managing symptoms

Is there a connection to COVID-19 vaccination?
 Possibly. The risk after vaccination is extremely rare, but it may happen. Myocarditis also occurs in people who do not get vaccinated.

Because it can’t be ruled out, a CDC safety panel has determined there is a “probable association” between myocarditis and pericarditis and mRNA COVID-19 vaccines (made by Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech).

What signs and symptoms should I be aware of after vaccination?
Cases have mostly occurred in teens and young adult males under the age of 30. Symptoms appear to be more common after the second dose.

CDC recommends that recently vaccinated people seek medical attention if they develop any of these symptoms after being vaccinated, particularly in the first week after vaccination:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Feelings of having a fast-beating, fluttering, or pounding heart

The chance of having these occur is remote. However, seek medical attention right away if you experience any of these symptoms.

Remember, it is normal to have mild to moderate symptoms, including fever, headache, fatigue, and joint/muscle pain, during the first week after receiving any COVID-19 vaccine. These side effects usually start within three days of getting a vaccine and should only last a few days.

Vaccination is still the best choice
The strong benefits of the vaccines far outweigh the low risk of myocarditis. The vaccine is very effective at preventing death and disease, and includes protection against new, more dangerous variant viruses.

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