

[dkpdf-button]

What is Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children?

Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS) is a rare but serious condition associated with SARS-CoV-2 infection (the virus that causes COVID-19). The condition results in different body parts becoming inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, stomach, or intestines. MIS can affect children, and this is known as Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C).

Who gets Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children?

MIS-C is seen in children and adolescents less than 21 years of age after an infection with SARS-CoV-2. The exact cause of MIS-C is not known yet. Many children with MIS-C have had a recent infection with SARS-CoV-2. Some may have a current infection with the virus.

How is Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children spread?

MIS-C is not contagious. It is a rare inflammatory condition that may appear after SARS-CoV-2 infection.

What are the symptoms of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children?

Symptoms include an ongoing fever PLUS more than one of the following:

- Stomach pain
- Bloodshot eyes
- Diarrhea
- Dizziness or lightheadedness (signs of low blood pressure)
- Skin rash
- Vomiting

Not all children will have the same symptoms. Children may not have all of the symptoms listed.

If anyone is showing **any** of the following signs, **seek emergency medical care immediately**:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone

This list does not include all possible symptoms. Call a healthcare provider for any other symptoms

that are severe or concerning to you.

How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?

Symptoms of MIS-C can appear weeks after infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 infection. Typically, MIS-C symptoms appear within two to six weeks after infection.

How is Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children diagnosed?

Because MIS-C symptoms are similar to many other diseases, testing is needed for a diagnosis. Testing could involve multiple types of tests such as blood tests, x-rays, or other types of evaluations.

What is the treatment for Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children?

The treatment available to patients with MIS-C is given by a healthcare provider in a hospital setting. Treatment for MIS-C is similar to other inflammatory conditions that affect children. Treatment might include medicine for symptoms and medicine to treat inflammation. Antiviral medicines do not help patients with MIS-C. This is because their illness is caused by inflammation that occurs *after* SARS-CoV-2 infection.

Most children with MIS-C get better quickly and do not have long-term health issues.

How can Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children be prevented?

The best way to prevent MIS-C is to [take actions to protect yourself from getting COVID-19](#). This includes staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccines for. It also includes washing hands with soap and water (or using hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available), not touching your face and eyes, and staying away from people who have COVID-19.

How can I learn more about Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children?

- If you have concerns about MIS-C, contact your healthcare provider.
- Call your local health department. A directory of local health departments is located at the [VDH Local Health Districts page](#).
- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [the CDC page on MIS-C](#) and [the CDC page on COVID-19](#).

February 2023

Opens pdf to download

Opens document to download

Opens in a new window

Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) Associated with COVID-19 Fact Sheet

External link will open in new window. Click link to exit Virginia Department of Health Website.