

# PERICARDITIS

Pericarditis is an inflammation of the pericardium of the heart: a sac of fibrous and serous tissue that envelops the heart.

Acute pericarditis can be caused by an infection, autoimmune disorders or be

idiopathic. Patients might experience pain in their chest, a low-grade fever, fatigue and difficulty breathing. Leaning forward relieves some of the pain and can help with breathing. Recovery from pericarditis is lengthy and can take weeks or months. If it lasts longer than

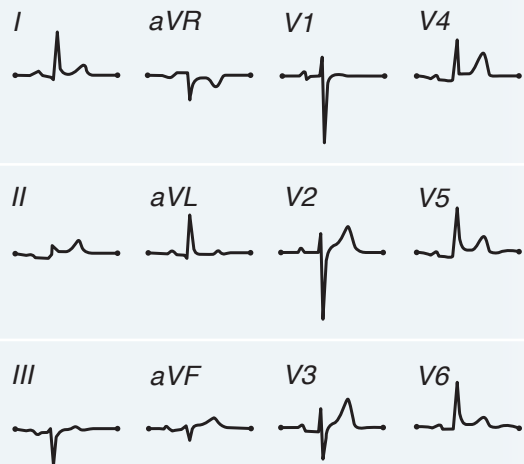
6 months, it is considered chronic, which can present as effusive pericarditis (fluid buildup) or constrictive pericarditis (scarring of the pericardium leading to constriction of the heart).

## Electrocardiogram (ECG)

Widespread concave ST elevation and PR depression in I, II, aVL, aVF, and V2-V6

Reciprocal ST depression and PR elevation in aVR

### Example: Acute pericarditis



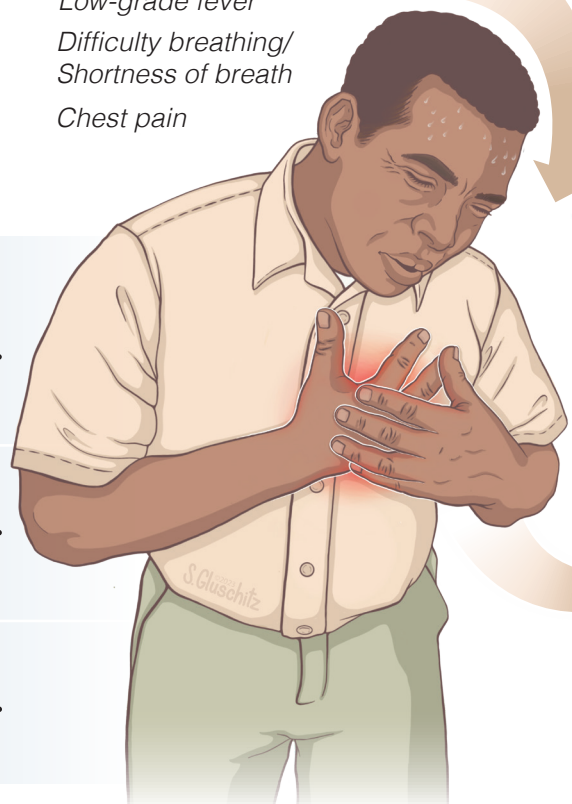
## Symptoms

Leaning forward to relieve pain

Low-grade fever

Difficulty breathing/  
Shortness of breath

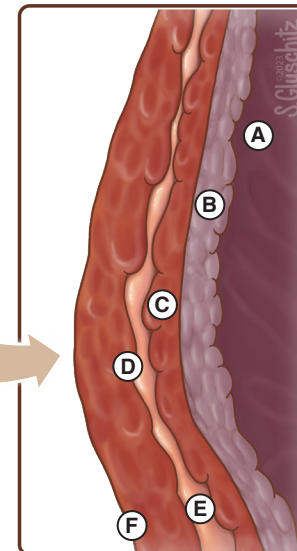
Chest pain



## Anatomy

- (A) Endocardium
- (B) Myocardium of right atrium
- (C) Visceral pericardium
- (D) Parietal pericardium
- (E) Pericardial cavity with serous fluid
- (F) Fibrous pericardium

Serous pericardium



Zoom into the layers  
of the heart

