

## Fast Facts

### Endocarditis

- An infection in the inner lining of the heart chambers and valves (endocardium)
- Can be caused by any infectious agent, but bacteria are the most common culprits
- Germs reach the heart by traveling through the bloodstream from somewhere else in the body
- Several things that can result in this happening, such as anything that can cause the gums to bleed (brushing teeth or having dental work done), having an infection elsewhere in the body, using catheters of any type for long periods of time, getting tattoos or body piercings where the needles aren't clean or using intravenous (IV) illegal drugs
- Can occur in healthy people, but is more likely to appear in individuals who already have damaged heart valves, artificial heart valves, congenital heart defects, a history of endocarditis or a history of IV drug use
- Symptoms can develop slowly or suddenly and usually vary from person to person
- Complications are severe and life-threatening

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
<p><i>Common:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Flu-like (fever and chills)</li> <li>-Fatigue</li> <li>-Aching joints/muscles</li> <li>-Shortness of breath</li> <li>-Night sweats</li> <li>-Chest pain (especially when breathing)</li> <li>-Swelling to feet/legs/abdomen</li> <li>-New/changed heart murmur</li> </ul> <p><i>Uncommon:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Unexplained weight loss</li> <li>-Blood in the urine</li> <li>-Tenderness in the spleen</li> <li>-Janeway lesions (red spots on the soles of your feet/palms of your hands)</li> <li>-Osler's nodes (red, tender spots under the skin of your fingers/toes)</li> <li>-Petechiae (tiny purple/red spots on your skin, whites of your eyes or inside your mouth)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Antibiotics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Initially in a hospital for a few weeks due high doses that are needed via IV</li> <li>-Then IV antibiotic therapy at home for several weeks</li> <li>-Monitor symptoms to make sure that infection isn't getting worse</li> </ul> <p><i>Surgery:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To fix damaged heart valves</li> <li>- Two types of valves used for replacement (biological – made from cow, pig or human heart tissue or mechanical – a man-made valve)</li> <li>-Doctor will discuss which is best for you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Maintain good oral health by brushing and flossing regularly and having regular dental exams</li> <li>-Avoid things that increase risk of having an infection (ex. getting tattoos or body piercings)</li> <li>-Monitor cuts/sores and any skin infections</li> <li>-Know the symptoms of endocarditis</li> </ul> <p><i>If at increased risk of developing endocarditis:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Talk to healthcare provider or dentist prior to having any procedures done</li> <li>-Take any preventive antibiotics as prescribed</li> <li>-Carry an endocarditis wallet card with you at all times (available through the American Heart Association)</li> </ul>

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