



## What Parents Need to Know about Pediatric Inflammatory Multisystem Syndrome

COVID-19 is an illness caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2 that appeared in December 2019. Since then, Pediatric Inflammatory Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (PIMS) or Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) has been reported in a small number of children around the world. A link between PIMS/MIS-C and COVID-19 has not been firmly established. Researchers believe that this condition might occur 4 to 6 weeks after a viral illness and may be due to a delayed immune response after exposure to the virus.

This syndrome causes inflammation in different parts of the body. Children may experience fever, pink eyes, rash, swollen hands and feet, stomach ache, vomiting, and diarrhea.

Most often, affected children recover. However, it is important that PIMS/MIS-C is detected early and treated. In very rare instances, children might experience difficulty maintaining blood flow and heart function, also called shock. Shock is a medical emergency.

### Does PIMS/MIS-C cause Kawasaki Disease?

Most pediatricians have knowledge or experience with a rare inflammatory disease similar to PIS/MIS-C called Kawasaki Disease. Doctors believe that Kawasaki Disease is an unusual immune response to an infection, so it is not surprising that similar cases may occur during an outbreak of a new virus. Although Kawasaki Disease and PIMS/MIS-C have much in common, children with PIMS/MIS-C tend to be older. Kawasaki Disease usually affects children younger than 5 years of age. Doctors around the world, including Canada, are studying how COVID-19 impacts children and how this new syndrome may behave differently from other inflammatory diseases in children that are known to have viral infections.

### What can I do for my child?

Call your doctor for advice if your child has a continuous fever lasting at least three days. Call your doctor or visit your local hospital if your child develops any of the following:

- Low energy, difficulty waking or reacting to you
- Pink eyes
- Rash
- Swollen hands or feet
- Red swollen and cracked lips
- Severe abdominal pain or diarrhea

### How serious is it?

Without treatment, inflammatory syndromes or diseases, can cause serious health problems, including long-term heart problems or death. When treated early, most children will recover fully and begin to feel better within a few days of treatment.

*Adapted from a May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 statement from the Canadian Paediatric Society*