

# Pediatric Inflammatory Multisystem Syndrome (PIMS): What Parents Should Know

From [Children's Hospital Los Angeles](#)

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**From the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, children were a population left relatively untouched by the novel coronavirus. If infected, children often had few symptoms unless an underlying condition compromised their health. It was believed that children could have the disease without suffering from the symptoms.**

**More recently, pediatric hospitals are sharing stories of children suffering from pediatric inflammatory multisystem syndrome (PIMS). You may have heard of this referred to as Kawasaki disease, inflammation syndrome, severe inflammation from COVID-19 or something else. Though the information available about PIMS is still extremely limited due to the small numbers of cases compared with the staggering numbers of people**

affected by COVID-19, pediatric specialists around the country are focusing their efforts on determining whether more cases exist.

## What is PIMS?

PIMS stands for pediatric inflammatory multisystem syndrome. It describes a new health condition seen in children who have been infected with novel coronavirus, recovered from it and later have an immune response that results in significant levels of inflammation in organ systems and symptoms. PIMS is similar to other inflammatory conditions like Kawasaki disease and toxic shock syndrome. Children who have PIMS generally did not have obvious symptoms when they were infected with novel coronavirus, like cough, and generally were healthy prior to developing PIMS.

## Is PIMS contagious?

No. PIMS is not contagious. In order to have PIMS, a child must have had the infection previously. It is believed that, for one to have the antibodies for COVID-19, a patient must be past the contagious stage of the disease.

## Do you need to have another health condition to get PIMS?

No. PIMS does not appear to be limited to children who already have another chronic or significant illness that compromises their immune system.

## If I think my child has PIMS, what should I do?

If you think that your child has PIMS, you should contact your child's doctor or pediatrician immediately. Specialty hospitals like Children's Hospital Los Angeles are sharing their findings with pediatricians in the community so that they know what to look for when screening patients. Families are likely to be able to obtain an initial screening quickly by contacting their pediatrician. Families with a child experiencing

**serious illness should not delay in getting care and should immediately seek attention from their nearest emergency room.**

## What will my pediatrician ask me?

**Your child's doctor or pediatrician is likely to discuss several symptoms with you, and will be particularly alert to children who have experienced a high fever for four or more days combined with other symptoms that may include:**

- **Abdominal pain without another explanation**
- **Both eyes appearing pink or red**
- **Enlarged lymph node ("gland") on one side of the neck**
- **Fever for seven or more days in an infant, for which no other explanation is identified**
- **Red, cracked lips or red tongue that looks like a strawberry**
- **Rash**
- **Swollen hands and feet, which might also be red**

## What is the treatment for PIMS?

**Currently, the treatment for PIMS is a similar protocol to what is used to treat Kawasaki disease. The goal is to reduce the inflammation to avoid long-term damage to arteries in the child's body and heart. This is accomplished through transfusions of plasma, which reduces the body's own immune response that is causing the inflammation.**

## If my child was sick before (with a positive test or no test at all), but is OK now, should I still get my child checked by a doctor?

**At this time, it is not recommended to do so. If your child does become ill and maintains a high fever that lasts for several days, call your child's doctor and seek medical attention immediately. If your pediatrician believes that your child should have a**

serology (antibody) test following your screening, a referral can be made to a lab to have the test completed.

If my child was diagnosed with Kawasaki disease recently, should I contact my child's providers?

Yes. It is likely that you have already been contacted for testing to validate whether your child has Kawasaki's disease or PIMS. The goal is to test any patients who have been diagnosed with Kawasaki disease following the arrival of COVID-19 and developing a follow-up plan for each family.