Infective endocarditis is a rare but serious disease caused by infection of a heart valve or the inner lining of the heart.

It can affect anyone, but you are at increased risk if you have:

- A replacement heart valve
- A history of infective endocarditis
- Or some types of congenital heart disease

These are some common symptoms, which may come and go, or may not all be present:

- Fever
- Sweats or chills especially at night
- Fluid build-up on chest or legs
- Muscle or joint aches
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Persistent cough
- Headache
- Nausea or poor appetite
- Weight loss
- Rash
- Fatigue
- Breathlessness

Consider infective endocarditis if:

- It most commonly presents as a flu-like illness
- It is difficult to diagnose because the symptoms are similar to those of other conditions

Tell the doctor you are worried about infective endocarditis.

Inform him or her about any recent:

- Invasive dental, medical or surgical procedures
- Skin wounds
- Tattooing or piercing
- Intravenous lines
- Intravenous drug use

SEEK URGENT MEDICAL ATTENTION

© 2017 BMJ Publishing group Ltd.

Disclaimer: This patient information leaflet is not validated. This information is provided without any representations, conditions or warranties that it is accurate or up to date. BMJ and its licensors assume no responsibility for any aspect of treatment administered with the aid of this information. Any reliance placed on this information is strictly at the user's own risk. For the full disclaimer wording see BMJ's terms and conditions: http://www.bmj.com/ company/legal-information/