



Children's
of Alabama®

Dear Patient,

At Children's of Alabama, our patients' wellbeing is our top priority. If at any time you have questions or concerns regarding the health or care of your child, we are here for you.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are investigating reports that devices used to heat and cool the blood during open-heart surgery have been linked to a potential contamination in the device's manufacturing process. This contamination could cause a rare, but treatable, infection of *Mycobacterium chimaera*, a species of bacteria known as nontuberculous mycobacterium (NTM). Accordingly, hospitals across the country are notifying patients who had open-heart cardiac surgery of this potential infection risk. You have been identified in our clinical records as a cardiac surgery patient who might be affected.

For patients who have had one of these surgeries, the chances of getting this infection are very low. CDC estimates the risk to be less than 1 percent. The bacteria are also very slow growing and can be difficult to diagnose. It is possible to develop symptoms years after surgery, so it is imperative to know the symptoms to look for and to discuss any symptoms or questions you may have with your primary care doctor. This infection cannot be spread person-to-person.

Symptoms of an NTM infection include:

- night sweats
- muscle aches
- weight loss
- fatigue
- unexplained fever

We are not aware of any patients who have developed this infection. We are dedicated to the safety and comfort of our patients and have consistently met or exceeded recommended monitoring and maintenance on these devices

We understand that you and your family may have additional questions or concerns regarding this matter. To help answer them, we have established a hotline at 205-638-2895. You may also obtain additional information and a letter of explanation to be shared with your primary care doctor on the Children's of Alabama website at www.childrensal.org/community-awareness

Sincerely,

Crayton A. Fargason, MD
Chief Medical Officer

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