

Clinton doctor, team of experts solve MIS-C mysteries

Special to The Clinton Courier

Dr. Claire Nettles Gilliam of Clinton, assistant professor of pediatric hospital medicine and general pediatrics for The University of Mississippi Medical Center, was part of a team of experts who cared for Allie Henderson when she recently fought for her life.

On a Monday, the thirteen-year-old called her mother from school to tell her “she wasn’t feeling like herself.”

By Saturday, the Copiah Academy eighth-grader was in the Children’s of Mississippi pediatric intensive care unit, diagnosed with MIS-C after an asymptomatic case of COVID-19.

“I’m still stunned by how sick my child was,” said Leann Henderson, Allie’s mother.

MIS-C, or Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children, is a rare but serious condition that is thought to be a delayed reaction to COVID-19. In MIS-C, the immune system of a child who has been infected with COVID-19 attacks the body’s healthy cells, particularly those involving blood vessels, the heart and other organs.

Allie felt well enough that Monday to play in a basketball game after school, but by Tuesday, “she was burning up,” Henderson said.

Her fever wouldn’t break. By the following Thursday, Allie had a negative rapid test for COVID-19 and a negative strep test at a local clinic. By this time, severe stomach pain accompanied a high fever. A CT scan at a Mississippi hospital she was referred to showed an inflamed appendix, so an appendectomy was

performed there that day.

Her fever came back the next day. “Her body was exhausted,” Henderson said. “Her eyes were blood-shot, and her blood pressure was dropping. Her hands were splotchy. Now we know those were symptoms of MIS-C, but we didn’t know that then.”

On that Saturday, five days from when Allie first felt symptoms, she was transferred to the University of Mississippi Medical Center and Children’s of Mississippi, the state’s only pediatric hospital.

“We weren’t there thirty minutes when doctors were saying they suspected she had MIS-C,” Henderson said. Allie immediately got a COVID-19 PCR test and testing including an EKG, an echocardiogram and imaging.

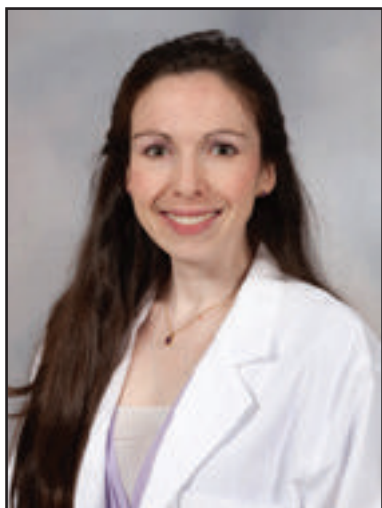
“After that, it was a waiting game to see what her diagnosis was,” Henderson said.

Testing showed Allie had an asymptomatic COVID-19 infection about eight weeks prior. MIS-C shows up in pediatric patients weeks to months after their COVID-19 infection. The MIS-C was affecting Allie’s heart, lungs, appendix and gastrointestinal system. During her illness, Allie lost fifteen pounds.

“She was very, very sick,” Henderson said, “but they told us they could treat her and that she was going to be okay, so that’s what we were holding onto.”

MIS-C is a serious condition for children, but it is very treatable, said Dr. Charlotte Hobbs, professor of pediatric infectious diseases and director of UMMC’s MIS-C clinic.

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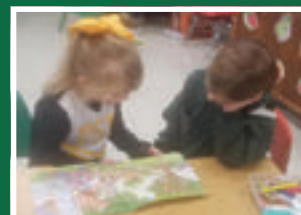
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