



March 1, 2017



Dear _____,

At Kaiser Permanente, your health is our number one priority. Our records show that you or a family member has had open heart surgery at our medical center. We are writing to share some important information with you from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regarding a machine used during open-heart surgery to heat and cool the blood.

This machine has been linked to a rare bacterial infection called nontuberculous mycobacterium (NTM). Like nearly all heart centers in the United States, Kaiser Permanente uses this machine. We also strictly follow the manufacturer's guidelines for maintaining and cleaning the machine.

The chance of getting sick from this machine is very low. We are contacting you because symptoms can develop up to four years after surgery. Symptoms of NTM infection are:

- Wound infection
- Breast bone pain
- Unexplained fever
- Night sweats
- Muscle aches
- Weight loss
- Fatigue

This infection cannot be spread from person to person. At this time, preventive therapy is not medically necessary or recommended. We have provided this information to your surgeon so that you are monitored appropriately. If you have any heart health concerns or are diagnosed with an infection believed to be related to your surgery, please contact your cardiac surgeon immediately.

For general questions, call our Customer Service line at (323) 783-3601 between 9am and 5pm, Monday through Friday. You can also find more information on the CDC website @ <https://www.cdc.gov/hai/outbreaks/heater-cooler.html>.

Sincerely,

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