



More walks...
and long talks.

Our cardiac and vascular clinic offers comprehensive, experienced and patient-centered care so you can get back to what matters most: Living your life.

WHAT IS AORTIC STENOSIS?

Aortic stenosis is a condition where one of the valves in the heart, called the aortic valve, does not fully open. Normally, the valve would open completely and allow blood to flow out of your heart into the aorta which carries blood to the rest of your body.

When the aortic valve does not open fully, your heart must work harder to pump blood to your body and, over time, this can cause other heart problems. This usually affects older adults, but some people can be born with it.

WHO IS AT RISK FOR AORTIC STENOSIS?

There are certain health conditions and habits that can increase your chances of developing aortic stenosis. The most common ones include:

- Older age
- Diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart disease
- Smoking
- History of infections that can affect the heart, such as rheumatic fever
- Certain heart conditions present at birth, such as bicuspid aortic valve
- History of radiation to the chest

WHAT ARE SYMPTOMS OF AORTIC STENOSIS?

Early in the disease, most people do not have any symptoms. Aortic stenosis is usually found when your doctor hears an abnormal heart sound with a stethoscope during an exam. As aortic stenosis

gets worse, you may experience shortness of breath, dizziness or fainting or chest pain, usually during physical activity. You should let your doctor know if you experience any of these symptoms.

WHAT ARE SOME COMPLICATIONS OF AORTIC STENOSIS?

Complications of aortic stenosis include:

- Heart failure
- Stroke
- Abnormal heart rhythm



WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TESTS FOR AORTIC STENOSIS?

Tests for aortic stenosis include:

- **Echocardiogram** - This is an ultrasound of your heart and allows your doctor to see the chambers and the valves of your heart and how well it is squeezing. This may be repeated over time to see if your aortic stenosis is changing.
- **Cardiac catheterization** - This is done to get more detailed measurements of your heart, if your aortic stenosis becomes severe and your valve needs to be replaced. A small tube is put into a blood vessel in your arm or leg and is moved up to your heart. Your doctor will then take measurements of the blood pressure and flow within your heart. They may also put dye into the tube to look for any narrowing or blockages in the arteries of your heart.

HOW IS AORTIC STENOSIS TREATED?

Treatment depends on how severe your aortic stenosis is and if you have symptoms or not. Your doctor will see you regularly to monitor your condition. They will also work with you to help control your diabetes, high cholesterol or high blood

pressure, if you have these. There are no medications that treat aortic stenosis itself, but your doctor may prescribe medications to help with any symptoms you have. If you are symptomatic and have severe aortic stenosis, you may need a procedure to replace or open your valve. Your doctor will discuss the risk and benefits of each option.

Treatments include:

- **Surgery** – The surgeon will remove your narrowed valve and replace it with a new one. This new valve could be made of metal or tissue from a pig or cow.
- **Minimally invasive procedures** - These are done through a small tube inserted into a blood vessel in your arm or leg or through a tiny incision in your chest.
- **Transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) or Transcatheter aortic valve implantation (TAVI)** – Involve placement of a new valve without removing your original valve.
- **Balloon valvuloplasty** – Inflation of a balloon in your valve to widen the opening and separate valve flaps that have become stuck together.



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