



Discussing Heart Valve Disease With Your Health Care Team



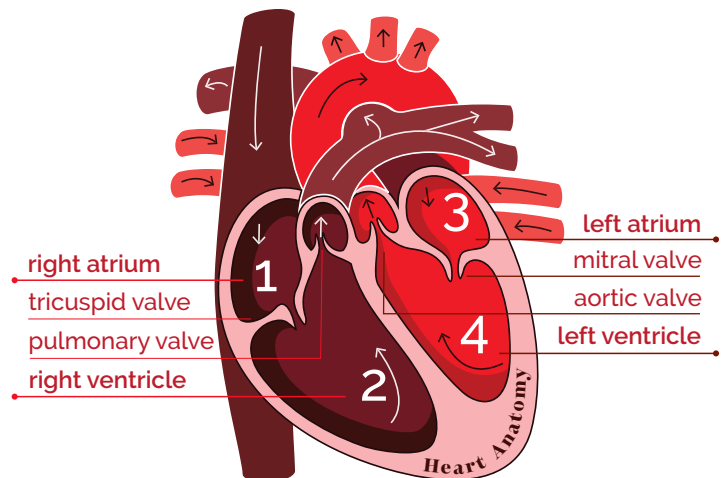
Did you know that about **5 million people** are diagnosed with heart valve disease each year?

In heart valve disease, valves that help blood flow through the heart do not work properly. This can cause serious health problems.

It is important to have regular checkups with your health care team so you can take care of your heart and your heart's valves.

Use this guide to help you prepare for your checkup so you can make the most of your appointment and lower your risk of heart valve disease.

Heart Valves & Chambers



Discussing Your Risk and Symptoms of Heart Valve Disease



Risk Factors

Aging puts us all at risk of heart valve disease, especially for those 65 or older. Other risk factors include:









- A **family history** of heart valve disease
- A **heart valve that is shaped differently** than normal—a condition called congenital malformation
- Previous **heart failure** or **heart attack**
- Previous infections, such as **rheumatic fever** and **blood infections**
- Heart disease risk factors**, such as hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes, smoking, and obesity
- Certain **autoimmune** diseases
- Previous cancer treatment**, such as radiation exposure and chemotherapy



Visit [CDC.gov/KnowYourHeart](https://www.cdc.gov/KnowYourHeart) for heart valve disease resources and information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Signs and Symptoms

Before your appointment, keep track of whether you have experienced any of the following:

 Shortness of breath	 Fever
 Chest pain	 Swelling in feet or ankles
 Dizziness	 Rapid weight gain
 Feeling extra tired, especially during activity	 Fluttering, pounding, or racing feelings in your chest

Asking Questions

The best way to learn about your risk for heart valve disease is by speaking with your health care team. Preparing any questions before your visit will help you make sure you get them all answered.

- What causes heart valve disease?
- Am I at risk for heart valve disease?
- How can I prevent heart valve disease?
- How can I be screened for heart valve disease?
- Is there any preparation to be done before screening?
- Are there medications to lower my risk?
- Are there side effects to this medication?
- Are there symptoms or changes in symptoms that will require me to call you or 911?

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It's normal to have questions about heart valve disease.

But early diagnosis is key!

Work with your health care team to listen to your heart and perform regular screenings for heart valve disease.

