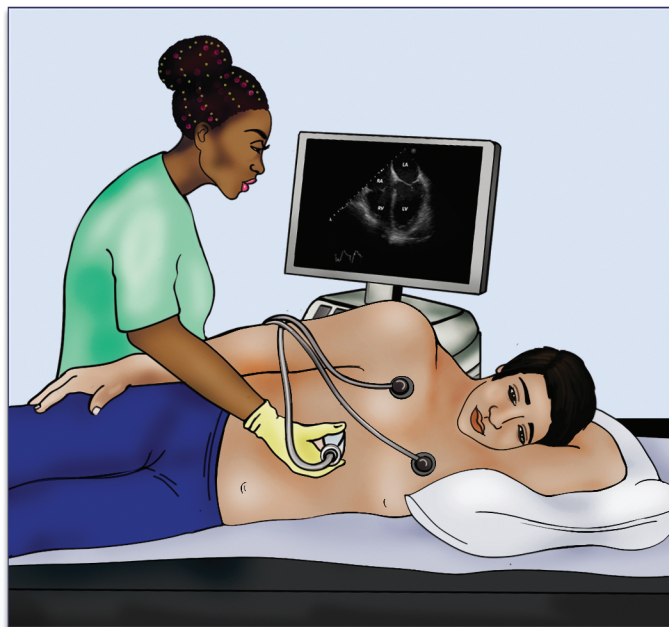


What tests will I need?

Most people with aortic stenosis will have an echocardiogram and ECG. Other tests outlined below may also be performed.



• Electrocardiogram (ECG)

Stickers are placed on the chest and the electrical activity of the heart is recorded.

• Echocardiogram (Echo or cardiac ultrasound)

During the test an ultrasound probe is placed on the chest and moving pictures of the heart are produced. The test takes around 30 minutes.

• Angiogram

This is an x-ray dye test of your heart arteries performed under local anaesthetic.

• Treadmill exercise test

Stickers are placed on the chest to record the electrical activity of the heart. You are then asked to walk on a treadmill whilst your blood pressure and heart rate are monitored.

Lifestyle

As with any type of heart disease, it is important that you follow a healthy diet and keep your weight within a normal range. If you smoke, it is advisable that you stop. Your GP can guide you to support available to help you stop smoking. Most patients with aortic stenosis will be encouraged to take regular gentle exercise but you should check this with your healthcare professional.

If you are planning to get pregnant, you should discuss this with your healthcare professional first and let them know immediately if you become pregnant. All patients with heart valve disease should visit their dentist on a regular basis to ensure good dental hygiene.

Symptoms

If you experience any new symptoms in between clinic appointments then it is important that you let your healthcare professional know.

Important symptoms to be aware of:

- Increasing shortness of breath (especially on exertion or when lying flat in bed)
- Severe or increasing ankle swelling
- Chest pain or tightness
- Blackouts / feeling lightheaded (especially on exertion)
- Palpitations (rapid or irregular heartbeat)
- Difficulty exercising (not being able to do as much for as long)

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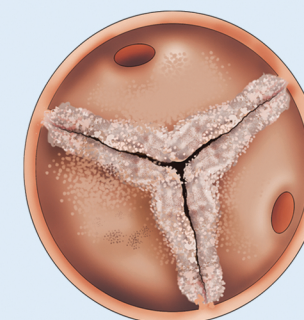


British Heart Valve Society

Improving Care for Patients with Heart Valve Disease

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

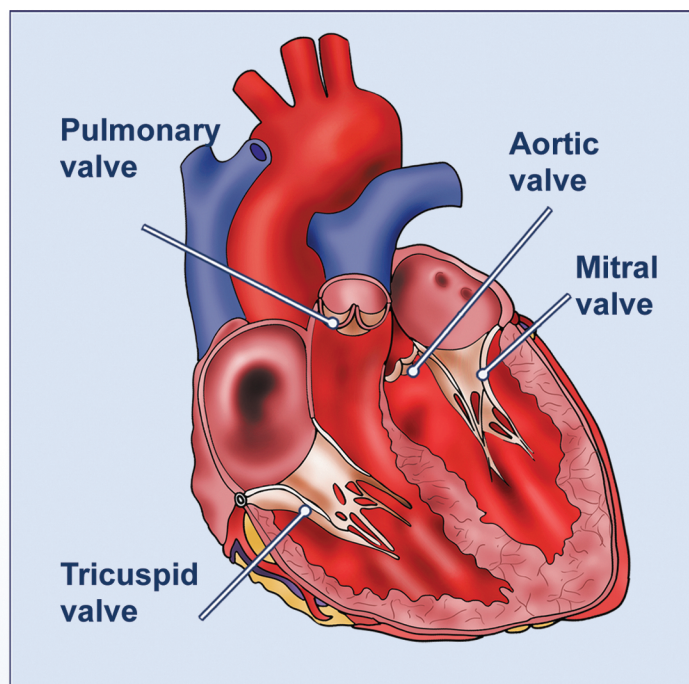
Aortic Stenosis



www.bhvs.org.uk

What are Heart Valves?

There are four valves in the heart. They allow blood to be directed around the heart and when working normally ensure the blood flows in one direction. They open and close with every heartbeat - that's 100,000 times a day!



What is the aortic valve?

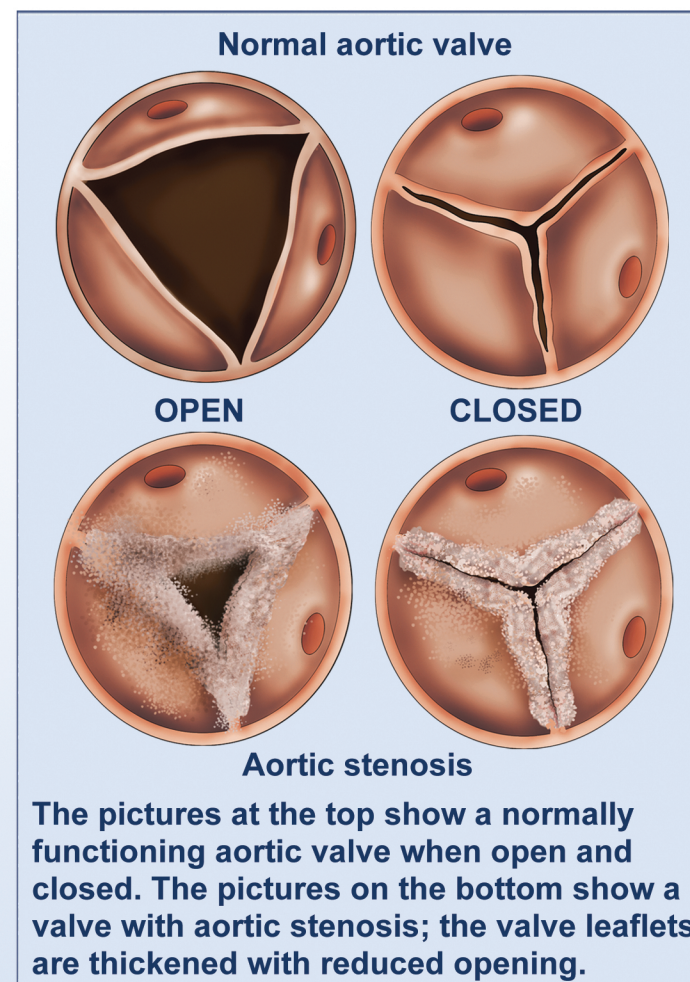
The aortic valve is the main outlet valve of the heart which allows blood to exit the heart with every heartbeat. Normal aortic valves have three leaflets, but around 1 in 50 people are born with an abnormal heart valve which has two leaflets, known as a bicuspid aortic valve.

What is aortic stenosis?

Aortic stenosis is a condition where the aortic valve becomes thickened or calcified (bony) and is less able to open. As a result, the blood flow across the valve is abnormal and means that a heart murmur can be heard when your heart is listened to by a stethoscope.

What causes aortic stenosis?

The most common cause of aortic stenosis is age-related degeneration (wear and tear) and as a result most people who have the condition are over the age of 60. In people born with an abnormal 'bicuspid' valve, the valve can become stenosed (thickened) at a younger age, and people with a bicuspid valve can be affected at any stage in their lives. Sometimes in addition to being narrowed, the aortic valve can also have aortic regurgitation (be leaky). Patients with both aortic valve stenosis (narrowing) and regurgitation (leaking) have a condition called mixed aortic valve disease.



What are my treatment options?

Aortic stenosis is a chronic (long term) condition. It can be graded into three categories; mild, moderate and severe.

Regardless of the severity of aortic stenosis, if you have no symptoms then it is likely that the Heart Valve Team will keep you under review with a clinic visit and echocardiogram (echo or cardiac ultrasound) on a regular basis. Patients with aortic stenosis are often followed up for many years without symptoms.

If you have severe aortic stenosis (severe narrowing) **and** you have symptoms then you may be referred for aortic valve surgery, which can be performed as either open heart surgery or keyhole valve replacement.

Due to the importance of symptoms in patients with aortic stenosis, you must let your Healthcare Professional know if you develop symptoms in between clinic appointments

Is aortic stenosis associated with any other conditions?

In patients with a bicuspid aortic valve, there can also be abnormalities of the aorta, and sometimes in addition to undergoing a regular echocardiogram you may also undergo regular CT or MRI scans.