

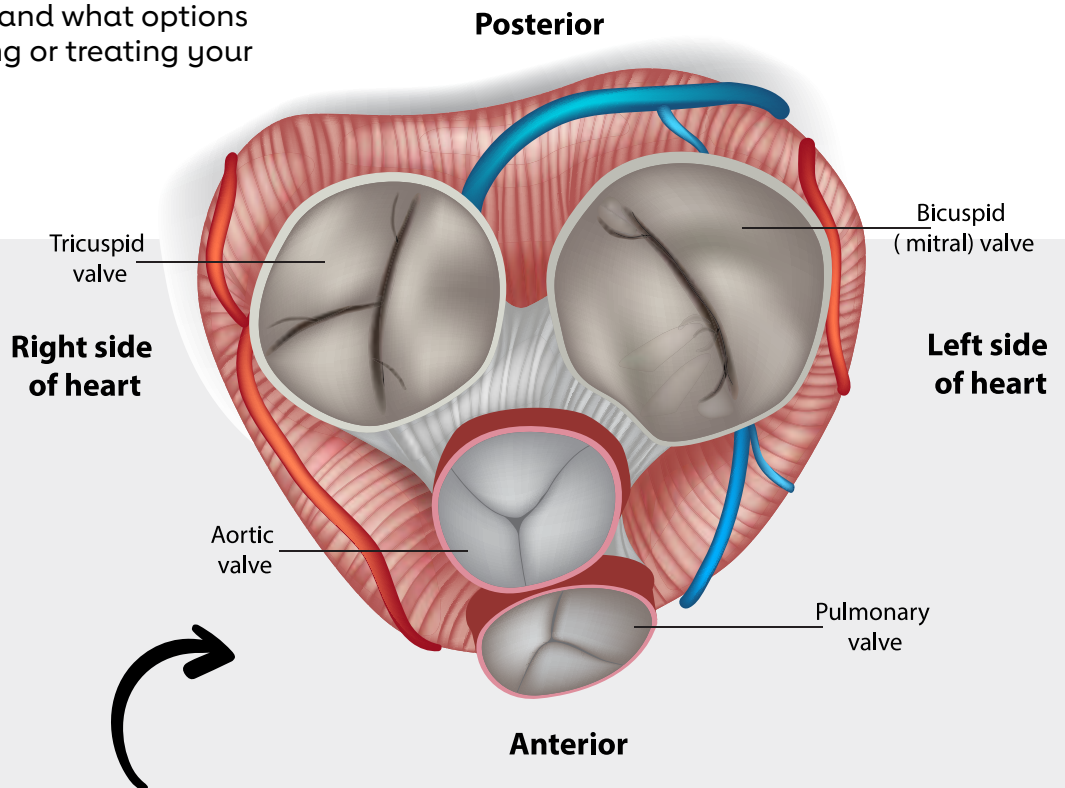


After Heart Valve Disease Diagnosis Discussion Guide

If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with heart valve disease, you might be experiencing a range of emotions. You may have many questions and feel overwhelmed, confused or uncertain about where to find answers.

You may feel worried, scared or perplexed about how heart valve disease might affect your life and your future, and what options are available for managing or treating your condition.

You are not alone. Each year, about 5 million people are diagnosed with heart valve disease in the United States. While heart valve disease is a serious health condition, it's usually treatable, especially if it's caught early.



Understanding your heart valve disease is an important first step. Here are the basics:

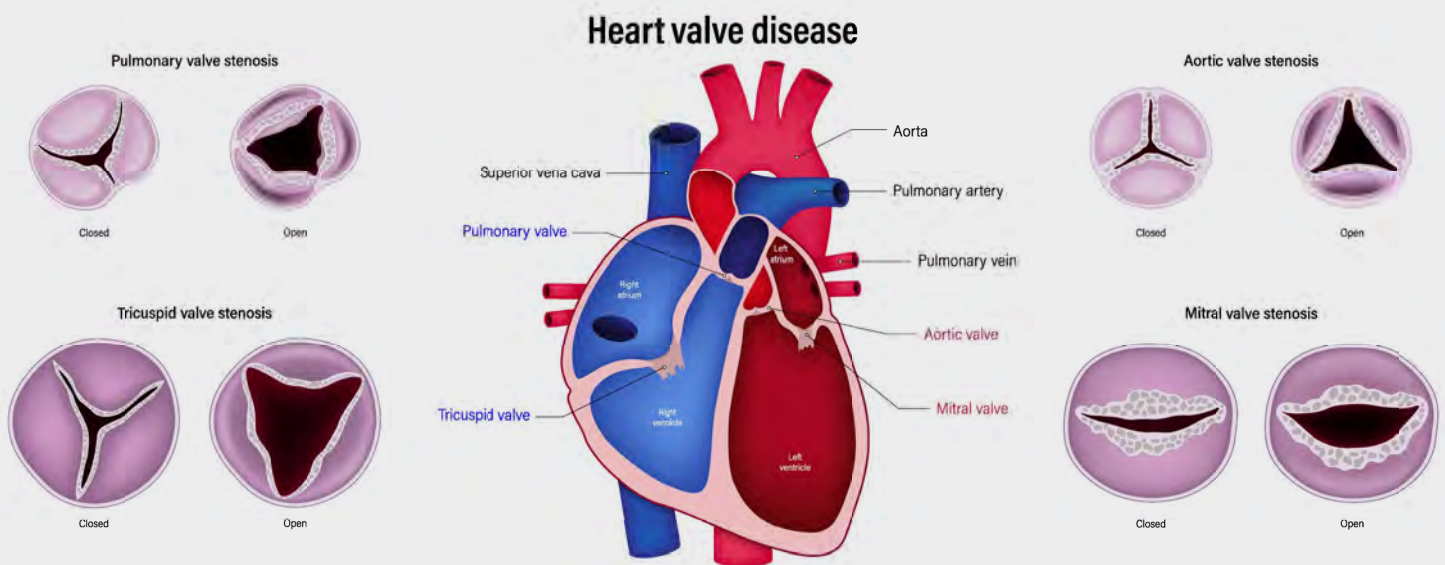
Your heart has four valves, which move blood throughout the heart and the rest of the body. In heart valve disease, one or more of these valves don't work correctly. As a result, blood can flow at a reduced rate or in the wrong direction.

Heart valve disease sometimes causes symptoms such as shortness of breath, fever, dizziness, chest pain, swelling in feet and ankles, and rapid weight gain. It can also cause tiredness or exhaustion (especially during activity), and unusual sensations (fluttering, pounding or racing) in your chest.

Regardless of whether you have many, few or no symptoms, **it's still critical that you receive proper management.**

Four Stages of Heart Valve Disease

There are four stages of heart valve disease. In order of increasing severity, they are Stages A, B, C and D. To correctly determine the stage of your heart valve disease, your health care professionals will use a combination of physical exams, diagnostic tests and information they gather about your medical history and symptoms.



Depending on the stage of your heart valve disease and other medical problems, **your health care professional may recommend managing and treating your condition through a combination of medications and/or surgeries, lifestyle behaviors** (such as modifying your exercise routine or quitting smoking) and medical monitoring.

In some situations (especially if your heart valve disease is severe), you may be evaluated and treated by a specialized multidisciplinary team.

Over time, if you notice any new symptoms, side effects or other medical conditions, it's critical that you let your health care team know so that they can adjust your monitoring and treatment accordingly.

Health care professionals and researchers also continue to look for new and better ways to treat heart valve disease. By partnering closely with your health care team, you can ensure that you're getting the latest information about the best options for monitoring and treating your condition.

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For more information, visit heart.org/heartvalves