

WHAT IS AORTIC STENOSIS?



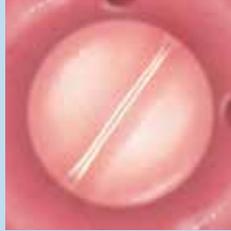
DEFINITION: Aortic stenosis (AS) is a valvular heart disease and is characterized by a narrowing of the aortic valve, due to a buildup of calcium, that prevents it from properly opening and closing.

HEALTHY AORTIC VALVE

The thin leaflets open and close properly.

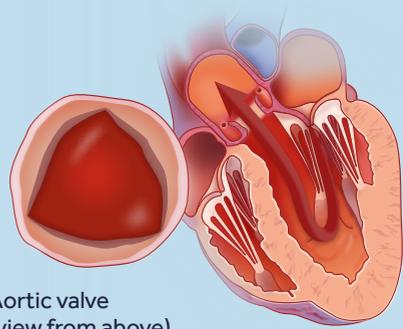


Tricuspid valve



Bicuspid valve

Normal aortic valve and blood flow



Aortic valve
(view from above)

DISEASED (STENOTIC) VALVE

The leaflets become stiff and thickened.

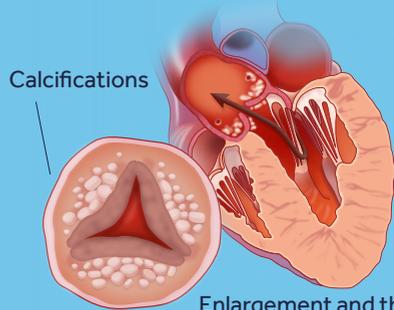


Tricuspid valve



Bicuspid valve

Calcifications narrow the aortic valve causing reduced blood flow



Calcifications

Enlargement and thickening of the heart wall caused by severe aortic stenosis

**THE INCREASING PRESSURE
WITHIN THE HEART
CAUSES IT TO WEAKEN**

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WHAT ARE THE CAUSES AND SYMPTOMS OF AORTIC STENOSIS?

SOME CAUSES OF SEVERE AORTIC STENOSIS INCLUDE:

AGE

The most common cause of severe symptomatic aortic stenosis is excessive wear on the aortic valve, which is usually a factor of age but may be accelerated in patients who are genetically predisposed to the disease.

AORTIC SCLEROSIS

The calcification and thickening of aortic valve leaflets is a precursor to aortic stenosis. Calcium build-up can occur over several years and is associated with an approximately 50 percent increase in the risks for both death from cardiovascular causes and heart attacks.

RHEUMATIC FEVER

This disease arises from complications of scarlet fever or strep throat and can also cause aortic stenosis by producing scars on aortic valve tissue, causing it to narrow.

RECOGNIZE THE SYMPTOMS AND EXTEND LIVES

Symptoms of severe aortic stenosis **develop insidiously** and **often go unrecognized** by patients and their physicians.

They include, but are not limited to:

SHORTNESS OF BREATH

IRREGULAR HEARTBEAT

DIZZINESS

HEART MURMUR

CHEST PAIN

FATIGUE



REDUCED ACTIVITY LEVEL

or the ability to perform normal, mild, low-level exertion activities

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**AORTIC STENOSIS
EDUCATION**
ALONG THE PATIENT PATHWAY