

**What  
does a  
heart  
murmur  
mean to  
you?**

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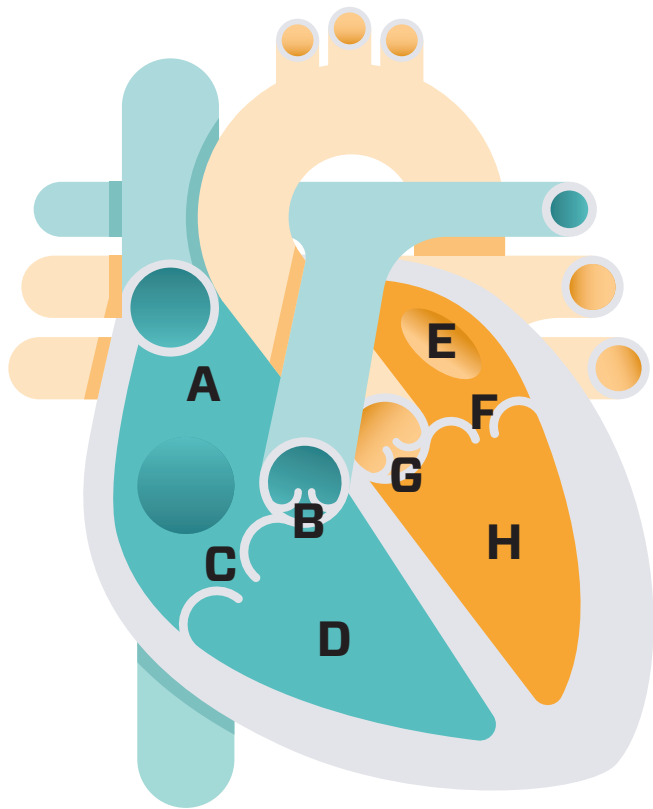
## What is a heart murmur?

A heart murmur is a sound caused by abnormal flow of blood across a valve. To identify a heart murmur, a doctor may use a stethoscope to listen to the heart.

## What could have caused my heart murmur?

A heart murmur can be a sign of heart valve disease (HVD). HVD is a common condition in adults above the age of 65.

The heart's main function is to pump blood to the rest of your body. Your heart has four valves - the aortic valve, mitral valve, tricuspid valve, and pulmonary valve.



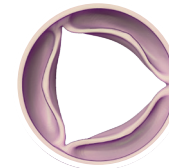
- A** Right Atrium
- B** Pulmonary Valve
- C** Tricuspid Valve
- D** Right Ventricle

- E** Left Atrium
- F** Mitral Valve
- G** Aortic Valve
- H** Left Ventricle

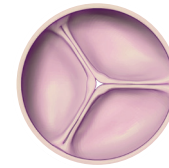
Each valve usually has two or three leaflets (flaps of tissue) that open and close like gates to regulate the one-way flow of blood through the heart. In heart valve disease, at least one heart valve isn't functioning properly.

There are several different types of heart valve disease, but whichever one it is, blood flow through the valve isn't as it should be. If flow is affected by a faulty valve, problems can arise and cause symptoms.

### Healthy Aortic Valve

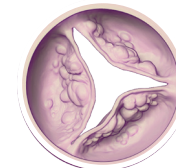


Open



Closed

### Diseased Aortic Valve



Open



Closed

## What are the symptoms of heart valve disease?

Symptoms of heart valve disease develop gradually and a patient will often adapt their lifestyle to manage them, or simply blame them on old age. Slowing down may not only be due to your age.

Symptoms may include:



Chest Pain



Fatigue



Shortness  
of breath



Lightheadedness,  
feeling dizzy,  
and/or fainting



Difficulty when  
exercising



**You know your body better than anyone. Listen to what it's telling you. If you suspect any change in your ability to perform routine daily activities, consult your cardiologist right away.**

## What should I do next?

To help diagnose heart valve disease, your doctor may order an echocardiogram. An echocardiogram is an ultrasound of your heart that shows the structure of your heart, heart valves, and blood flow. An echo can help your doctor determine how well your heart valves are working. It can detect changes for heart valve patients before symptoms occur.

**Make sure to attend your appointments and share any changes in your ability to perform daily activities with your doctor, so you may get the treatment you need.**



You may think the pace at which you are slowing down is inevitable as you age, but that's not necessarily true. Talk to your doctor about HVD and getting an echocardiogram, a simple heart ultrasound.

