



Understanding Mitral Regurgitation



Important Information About Significant, Symptomatic, Degenerative Mitral Regurgitation—and Your Treatment Options

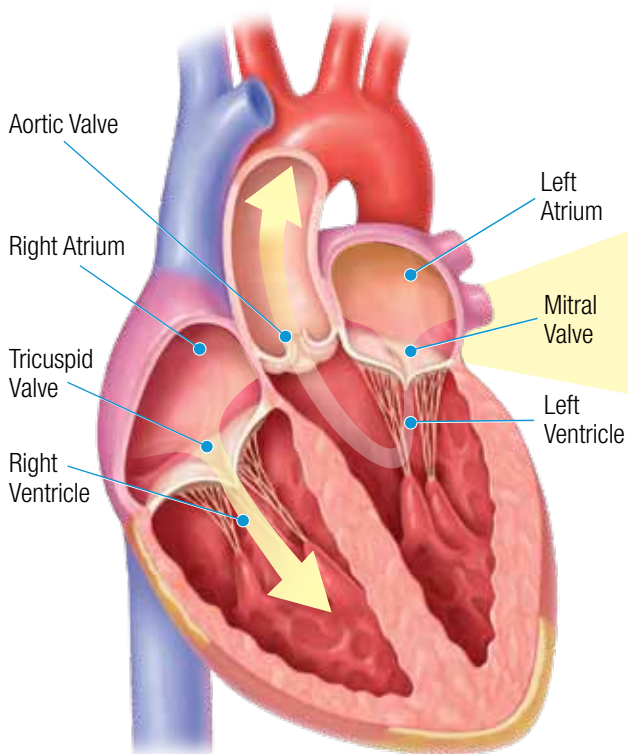
Understanding Your Heart

How Your Heart Works

Your heart beats thousands of times per day, pumping dozens of gallons of blood each hour. It pumps blood through your lungs, where the blood is replenished with oxygen, and pumps it back out to the rest of your body.

The heart has four chambers; the upper two chambers are called the **left atrium** and **right atrium**, and the lower two are called the **left ventricle** and **right ventricle**.

Heart valves are the doorways between these chambers. They open to let blood pass from one chamber to the next, closing quickly between heartbeats so blood does not flow backward.



Note: pulmonary valve not shown

Symptoms of mitral regurgitation can include:

- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Coughing
- Lightheadedness
- Swollen feet or ankles
- Excessive urination

Left untreated, mitral regurgitation may lead to congestive heart failure and eventually death.

The Mitral Valve and Mitral Regurgitation

The **mitral valve** is the valve between the left atrium and left ventricle of your heart. In a normally functioning mitral valve, blood flows in a single direction between the left atrium and left ventricle. When your mitral valve's two leaflets (or flaps) do not close properly, some blood flows backward through the valve back into the left atrium. This is called **mitral regurgitation** (or **MR**).

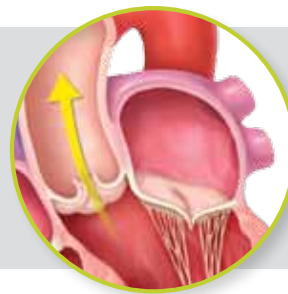
To compensate and keep blood flowing through the body, the left ventricle pumps harder. This strain can lead to other heart complications.

What Is Degenerative Mitral Regurgitation?

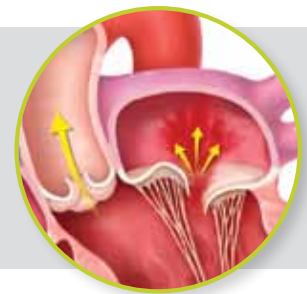


One type of mitral regurgitation is called **degenerative MR** (also called primary or organic). It is caused by an abnormality in the mitral valve itself. Degenerative MR can be related to age, a valve abnormality present from birth, heart disease, coronary artery disease, or a history of rheumatic fever.

If you have degenerative mitral regurgitation that allows a very large amount of blood to backflow in your heart, your doctor may diagnose you as having degenerative mitral regurgitation that is moderate to severe. If you also have symptoms of congestive heart failure or other related heart conditions, your disease may be classified as **significant, symptomatic, degenerative mitral regurgitation**.



Normally functioning mitral valve



Improperly functioning mitral valve allowing blood to flow back into left atrium (mitral regurgitation)

What Are Your Treatment Options?

Treatment for your mitral regurgitation depends on how severe it is and how sick you are. There are medications available to reduce symptoms, such as fluid buildup in the lungs, but no medications address the underlying problem with your mitral valve.

Mitral regurgitation itself can only be treated in two ways: mitral valve surgery or transcatheter mitral valve repair. You will be evaluated by a team of heart doctors to determine which option is right for you.

Mitral Valve Surgery

There are two types of surgery to treat degenerative mitral regurgitation: mitral valve repair or mitral valve replacement. Repair of the natural valve is preferred over replacement. If the valve cannot be repaired, it is replaced with an artificial valve.

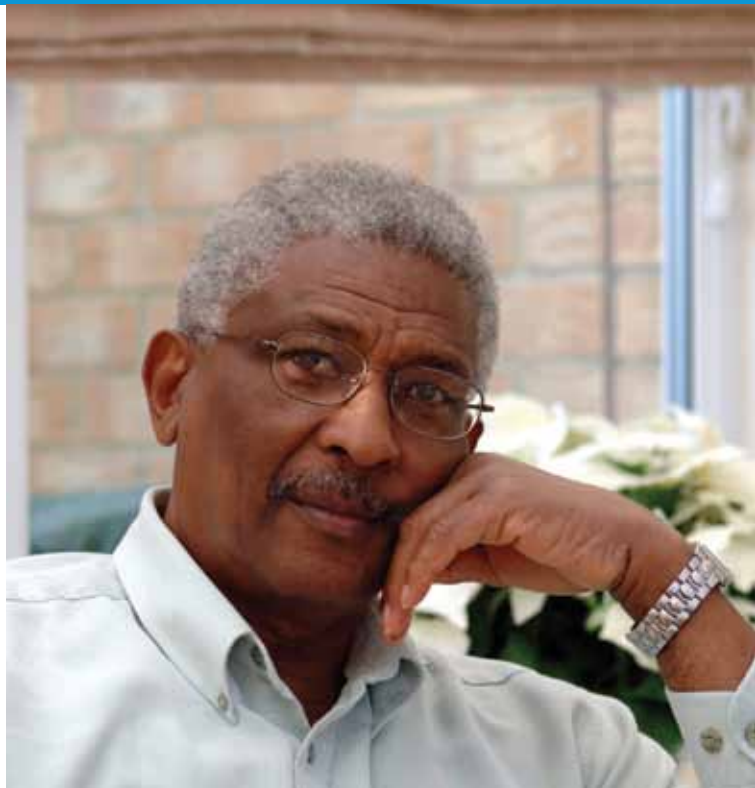
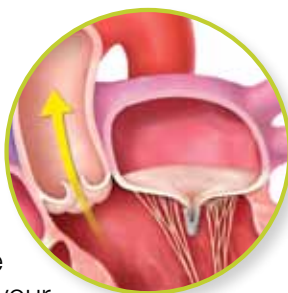
While open-heart surgery is an effective treatment for mitral regurgitation, your doctor may suggest an alternative treatment due to your age, advanced heart failure, or other serious medical conditions.

Transcatheter Mitral Valve Repair

Transcatheter mitral valve repair (TMVR) is a minimally invasive procedure that may be an option for patients who are too sick for surgery (also referred to as being at “prohibitive risk” for surgery).

Unlike surgery, this procedure does not require opening the chest and temporarily stopping the heart.

In this procedure a clip will be implanted onto the center of your mitral valve. This reduces mitral regurgitation, and the valve continues to open and close on either side of the clip, allowing blood to flow through.



Treatment can lead to a more comfortable, active life.

Please share this guide with your family, and discuss all treatment options with your doctor.

If you have significant, symptomatic, degenerative mitral regurgitation, explore your treatment options.

The right treatment can help you feel better and improve your quality of life.

Discuss all treatment options with your doctor. He or she can describe the risks and benefits and help you decide which option is right for you.

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