

After a Heart Valve Disease Diagnosis



Your health care team will advise you on your treatment options and help you decide how best to take care of your heart. Treatment and regular checkups can help you manage your heart valve disease.

It's your heart. Work with your health care team to stay up to date on heart valve disease care.

Treatment



Most cases of heart valve disease can be treated.

You may be prescribed **medicines** to treat your symptoms. These may include drugs to treat high blood pressure or heart rate, or blood thinners.

If your valve is causing more severe symptoms, your health care team may recommend surgery. The type of **surgery** will depend on the valve affected and the cause of the disease.

- Sometimes valves can be repaired.
- A valve that is not working well may need to be replaced. This may involve open-heart surgery or the use of a catheter—a thin tube that is threaded through a blood vessel to the heart.

Lifestyle



Your health care team may recommend heart-healthy lifestyle changes. Taking care of your heart health can help delay or improve symptoms.

Heart-healthy living includes:



Choosing healthy foods and drinks



Getting regular physical activity



Not smoking



Managing your stress



Maintaining a healthy weight



Taking care of your teeth and gums

Also, watch out for rapid weight gain, which can indicate that your heart is not working as well as it should.

Avoid Infections



Reduce your risk of serious complications by:

- Brushing and flossing your teeth to avoid cavities and gum disease, and getting regular dental checkups
- Getting treatment for respiratory infections such as strep throat
- Taking antibiotics as instructed to prevent infection for example, if they are prescribed before surgery or a dental procedure

Checkups



As with any heart condition, people living with heart valve disease need continued care and regular screenings. Stay current with checkups to monitor your heart valve disease.

Complications



It is important to work with a health care team to manage your heart valve disease.

If untreated, heart valve disease can lead to serious complications, including:

- Heart failure
- Stroke
- Blood clots
- Arrhythmia (irregular heartbeats)

Social Support



Connections with other people can improve your health. Social support may include buddy systems or groups focused on activities such as healthy cooking, walking, and other forms of activity.