

Patient Information

Aortic Dissection

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- The aorta is the main blood vessel that pumps blood away from the heart to the body.
- Dissection involves “tearing” of the lining of the aorta.
- Dissection can cause weakening or even rupture of the aorta.
- Dissection is commonly associated with aortic aneurysm (enlargement.)
- Dissection can be caused by atherosclerosis, aneurysm, trauma, genetic disorders or inflammatory disorders.

SYMPTOMS

- Pain - classically described as “tearing” chest pain that radiates to the back
- Can mimic symptoms of a heart attack
- Can rarely be asymptomatic - depending on location of dissection

DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

- Ultrasound / Echocardiogram
- CT scan / MRI
- TEE (trans-esophageal echocardiogram)

TREATMENT

- Treatment depends on the location of the dissection.
- Ascending dissection is best treated surgically.
- Descending dissection is usually best treated medically (blood pressure control and statin therapy) with routine monitoring.

FOR MORE INFORMATION or to make an appointment at URMC Cardiology at Highland Hospital, please call (585) 341-6780 or visit us online at www.highlandheart.urmc.edu