

Patient Information

Aortic Insufficiency

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- This condition is due to insufficient opening of the aortic valve, which prohibits blood from flowing out of the heart as easily as it normally would.
- Typically this is a consequence of age and “wear and tear” but can be due to abnormal valve structure (see bicuspid aortic valve), valve infection or rheumatic heart disease.
- This condition can cause strain on the heart due to restricting blood flow to the heart and other organs (think putting your finger over the end of a hose.)
- Usually this condition progresses slowly over the course of years.

SYMPTOMS

- Initially patients are asymptomatic.
- When the valve becomes more significantly narrowed, the most common symptoms are
 - Shortness of breath with exertion
 - Dizziness
 - Leg swelling
 - Chest pain
 - Passing out (syncope)

DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

- Listening with a stethoscope (auscultation) by a physician.
- Echocardiogram (cardiac ultrasound.)

TREATMENT

- No particular medical treatment has been shown to slow progression of the process, although blood pressure control may improve valve function.
- Ultimately, patients may need valve replacement.

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