

Patient Information

Mitral Valve Regurgitation (Insufficiency)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The mitral valve is the door that separates the top part of the heart, the atria, from the bottom part, the ventricle, on the left side. Valves are like doors that open and close to allow pressure in the heart to increase and decrease which creates flow going forward.

Mitral regurgitation means that the door is fully closing or isn't staying closed. Without a closed door, blood flows backwards from the ventricle back into the atria. The condition can be caused from lots of things, prolapse, infection, a dilated heart, calcium on the valve, or a heart attack.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms usually progress over time, depending on the amount of leaking present. Most patients are asymptomatic, but in more severe cases, the following can develop.

- Shortness of breath
- Palpitations
- Leg swelling
- Heart failure

DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

Mitral valve regurgitation (insufficiency) is usually discovered on a physical exam by listening to the heart. An echocardiogram (ultrasound) is the best way to see the valve and estimate the amount of backflow.

- Listening with a stethoscope (auscultation)
- Echocardiogram

TREATMENT

Often, no treatment is needed. With more severe cases, patients will need blood pressure medications and diuretics. If the symptoms cannot be effectively managed with medication, valve replacement through open-heart surgery is needed.

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