

Why Do You Need Transcatheter Mitral Valve Replacement?

Your heart is an incredible organ that works 24 hours a day, every day, to pump blood through your body.

To do its job, your heart has several different parts, including:

Four chambers. These muscular chambers squeeze, or contract, with every heartbeat to force blood through your blood vessels.

Four valves. These valves are located between the upper and lower chambers and the major blood vessels that carry blood away from your heart. The valves' job is to make sure that your blood flows in the right direction and doesn't flow backward.

The mitral valve is one of your four heart valves. It rests between the upper and lower chambers on the left side of your heart. The left lower chamber (called the left ventricle) is the main pumping chamber that pushes blood from the heart to your body.

If your mitral valve isn't working right and it can't be repaired, the best option may be to replace it.

There are two reasons your healthcare provider may recommend mitral valve replacement. They include:

Mitral valve stenosis. This occurs when the valve opening is too narrow so not enough blood can flow through the opening.

Mitral valve regurgitation. This occurs when blood can flow backward through the mitral valve with every heartbeat. This can cause blood pressure inside your heart to increase.

A mitral valve replacement might also be recommended if you have an older mechanical heart valve that isn't working right anymore.

You may not feel any symptoms with mild mitral valve stenosis or regurgitation, or you might experience symptoms such as: racing or pounding heartbeat, feeling tired, and feeling short of breath.

Even if you don't have symptoms, however, you might still need a mitral valve replacement.

Untreated mitral valve disease can lead to more serious issues like fluid in your lungs or heart failure.

"Both leaky and sticky can lead to heart failure for different reasons but yes, they both-- the shortness of breath that I talked about that's really heart failure so if you think of the blood moving forward in a series circuit if you have stickiness at one point then the blood will back up all the way into the lungs also just like mitral regurgitation or mitral leakiness."

If you do need a mitral valve replacement, it can be done with either traditional open-heart surgery or with a newer procedure called transcatheter mitral valve replacement, or TMVR.

TMVR is a minimally invasive surgery. This means your doctor doesn't use large openings in your chest. Instead, your doctor will access your heart through a very small incision either in your leg or chest, then use a long, thin tube called a catheter to actually perform the procedure.

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There are several advantages to TMVR over traditional surgery. There is usually: less stress to your body, less pain, a shorter hospital stay and a faster recovery.

And it can be done with patients who are older and may not be able to handle surgery.

However, because the mitral valve is located deep inside the heart, there are some risks with the procedure.

Talk to your healthcare provider about the risks before your surgery so you can feel confident it is the right treatment option for you.