

# Treating Hypertrophic Obstructive Cardiomyopathy

Your heart is always working, pumping blood throughout your body.

Hypertrophic obstructive cardiomyopathy, or HOCM, can make it harder for your heart to do its job.

This disease causes parts of the heart, including the wall of muscle between the right and left sides of the heart, to grow thick. This wall is called the septum.

Thickening of the septum can cause a bulge in the left ventricle. This bulge can impede blood flow out of the heart to the rest of your body.

HOCM is often caused by changes in certain genes. These changes can occur randomly. But they are more often passed down from parent to child.

HOCM may cause symptoms, but not always.

Symptoms of HOCM often appear later in life. They may get worse with physical activity.

They may include: shortness of breath, chest pain, fatigue, irregular heartbeat, dizziness or lightheadedness, fainting, and swelling in the legs, feet, or belly.

*“There's several other things that can happen, including arrhythmias, which means that the heart rhythm and the rate are different than normal.”*

To diagnose HOCM, your healthcare provider will recommend certain tests.

You will likely have a chest X-ray, echocardiogram, or cardiac MRI. These imaging tests can show thickening of the heart muscle.

You may also have an electrocardiogram or stress test. These can tell your provider more about your condition.

Treatment for HOCM focuses on easing your symptoms. It can also lower your risk for: heart rhythm problems, heart failure, and sudden cardiac arrest.

Your healthcare provider will likely advise a heart-healthy lifestyle. This means: eating more healthy foods; not smoking; getting enough sleep; and managing other heart conditions like high blood pressure, if needed.

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Physical activity can also keep your heart pumping well. But it may make your symptoms worse. Talk with your provider about a safe activity level for you.

Your provider may also give you medicines to ease your symptoms. These can help your heart work better.

If lifestyle changes and medicines don't help, your provider may recommend septal myectomy.

This surgery reduces the thickness of the septum. Extra muscle is removed, improving blood flow out of the heart.

If surgery is not an option for you, your provider may do alcohol septal ablation. During this procedure, your provider injects ethanol alcohol into the thick part of the septum.

The alcohol shrinks the septum, letting blood flow more easily.

If you have an irregular heartbeat due to HOCM, your provider may also recommend an implantable cardioverter defibrillator or a pacemaker. These can help treat life-threatening heart rhythm changes.

In severe cases of HOCM, a heart transplant may be needed.

Treating HOCM can help you feel better. Partner with your healthcare provider to choose the best treatment for you.