

Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI): Before Your Procedure

Transcatheter aortic valve implantation, also called TAVI, is a procedure to help with a problem called aortic valve stenosis.

You may also hear it called TAVR, or transcatheter aortic valve replacement.

Aortic valve stenosis is when the valve between your heart and the large blood vessel that carries blood to your body— your aorta—is no longer opening wide enough.

When this valve doesn't open well, blood doesn't flow through the heart as it should.

TAVI can help people with aortic valve stenosis feel better and live longer.

TAVI puts a new valve inside your aortic valve, without replacing your existing valve and without doing major surgery.

TAVI valves are made of animal tissue and metal.

Here's how TAVI is done.

Before the procedure, you'll get medicine to help you feel relaxed or fall asleep so you won't feel any pain.

The doctor will not make any cuts to do the procedure.

Instead, the doctor makes a small poke— usually in a blood vessel in your groin— and puts a thin tube called a catheter into the blood vessel.

The doctor guides the catheter through your blood vessels and into your heart.

The new valve is collapsed to fit inside the catheter.

The doctor then moves the valve into your aortic valve.

Depending on the type of valve, the valve might expand on its own, or the doctor may use a tiny balloon to expand the valve.

Your aortic valve does not need to be removed.

At the end of the procedure, the doctor will remove the catheter.

You'll stay in a recovery room for a while.

If the catheter was put in your groin, you will need to lie still and keep your leg straight for several hours.

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This is to make sure the catheter site has healed enough to stop any bleeding.

After the procedure, you may spend up to a few days in the hospital.

Before the procedure, tell your doctor about all the medicines and natural health products you take, especially blood thinners.

Some can raise the risk of bleeding or cause problems with anesthesia.

Your doctor will tell you which medicines to take or stop before the procedure.

And follow your doctor's directions for preparing for your procedure, including when you should stop eating and drinking.

Be sure to bring your photo ID, health insurance card, and any paperwork your hospital may have asked for.

Having a procedure can be stressful.

But knowing what to expect and how to prepare can help.

And remember, you can always call your doctor if you have questions or concerns.