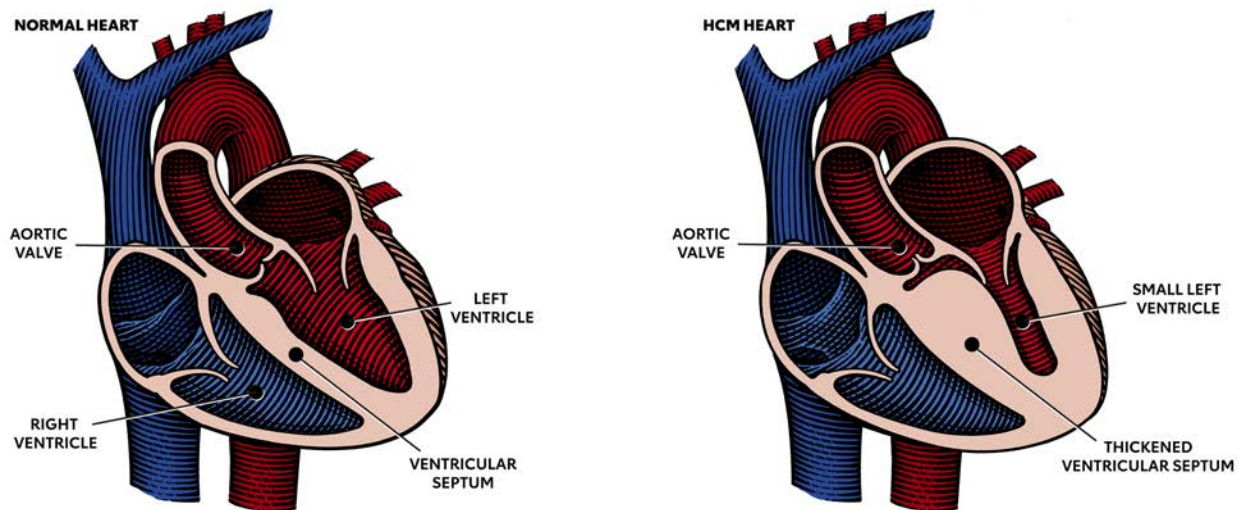




# What Is Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy?

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM) is a thickening of the lower main pumping chamber of the heart (the left ventricle). It can affect people of any age but is more likely as age increases. It is most often diagnosed in middle age and symptoms can vary widely.

HCM is a heart muscle disorder that can't be explained by another cardiac or general disease. HCM can be caused by abnormal genes that make the walls of the pumping chamber thicken and stiffen. This limits how much blood the ventricle can take in and pump out with each heartbeat. It has been considered the most common genetic disease of the heart muscle. Family members of people with HCM should have their hearts checked to see if they also have the condition.



Illustrations of a normal heart (left) and a heart with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. Note that the heart walls (muscles) are much thicker in the heart with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy.

## What should I know about HCM?

There are two types of HCM. The most common type is obstructive HCM. Two-thirds of the people with HCM have this type. In it, the thickened part of the heart muscle, usually the wall (septum) between the two bottom chambers (ventricles), blocks or reduces the blood flow from the left ventricle to the aorta.

In non-obstructive HCM, the heart muscle is thickened but doesn't block blood flow out of the heart.

## What are the symptoms of HCM?

The most common symptoms are:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Fainting
- Dizziness
- Rapid or irregular heartbeat (palpitations)
- Swelling in the lower part of the body (ankles, feet, legs) or in the neck veins

If symptoms get worse over time, new symptoms may appear. If this happens, people with HCM may have to make lifestyle or medical changes to adapt to the disease.

Some people have no obvious symptoms, while others may only feel symptoms with exercise or exertion. Speak with your health care professional about any new or worsening symptoms.

(continued)



## What Is Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy?

### Can HCM cause other health problems?

People with HCM are at greater risk of developing atrial fibrillation. Atrial fibrillation is a quivering or irregular heartbeat. It can lead to blood clots, stroke or other heart-related problems. HCM can also lead to sudden cardiac arrest, but this is rare.

HCM is a chronic disease that **can progress** to the point at which some patients can develop debilitating symptoms and/or heart failure. Heart failure means that the heart can't pump enough blood to keep up with the needs of the body.

### How is HCM diagnosed?

Because HCM can be passed from parents to children, your health care professional will want to know your medical history. They will want to know if you've had any signs or symptoms of HCM. They will also want to know if anyone in your family has been diagnosed with HCM, heart failure or cardiac arrest.

Your doctor will listen to your heart and lungs with a stethoscope. If they hear a swishing or whooshing sound, called a murmur, that could mean there is a problem with blood flow through the heart which may suggest HCM or another heart condition.

Your doctor may do an echocardiogram. It checks the thickness of the heart muscle and blood flow through the heart. In some cases, another type of echocardiogram,

transesophageal echo (or TEE), may be done. A TEE is done using a probe inserted in the throat while under sedation.

Other diagnostic tests may include:

- Electrocardiogram (ECG)
- Cardiac magnetic resonance imaging (cardiac MRI or CMR)
- Stress tests
- Holter and event monitors
- Genetic testing

Diagnosis of HCM is important because symptoms may be confused for other diseases.

### What can be done for HCM?

There is currently only one disease-specific medication to treat hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. Mavacamten is used to treat the obstructive form of HCM in people who have symptoms.

A healthy lifestyle is recommended for all people with HCM. This includes staying active, eating a healthy diet, maintaining a normal weight, getting good quality sleep and not smoking. Follow your health care professional's advice about physical activity.

For those with symptoms, medications and procedures are used to manage them. Your health care professional may recommend regular visits to monitor symptoms and control other chronic conditions. In the case of severe HCM, they may recommend surgery.

## HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- 1 Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721) or visit [heart.org](http://heart.org) to learn more about heart disease and stroke.
- 2 Sign up for our monthly *Heart Insight* e-news for heart patients and their families at [HeartInsight.org](http://HeartInsight.org).
- 3 Connect with others sharing similar journeys with heart disease and stroke by joining our Support Network at [heart.org/SupportNetwork](http://heart.org/SupportNetwork).

### Do you have questions for the doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write down questions for the next time you see your health care professional.

For example:

**What kind of lifestyle changes do I need to make?**

**What should I do if my symptoms get worse?**

## MY QUESTIONS:

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk of heart disease, manage your condition or care for a loved one. Visit [heart.org/AnswersByHeart](http://heart.org/AnswersByHeart) to learn more.