

Aortic Stenosis

Exercise information

Information for parents, carers
and teachers

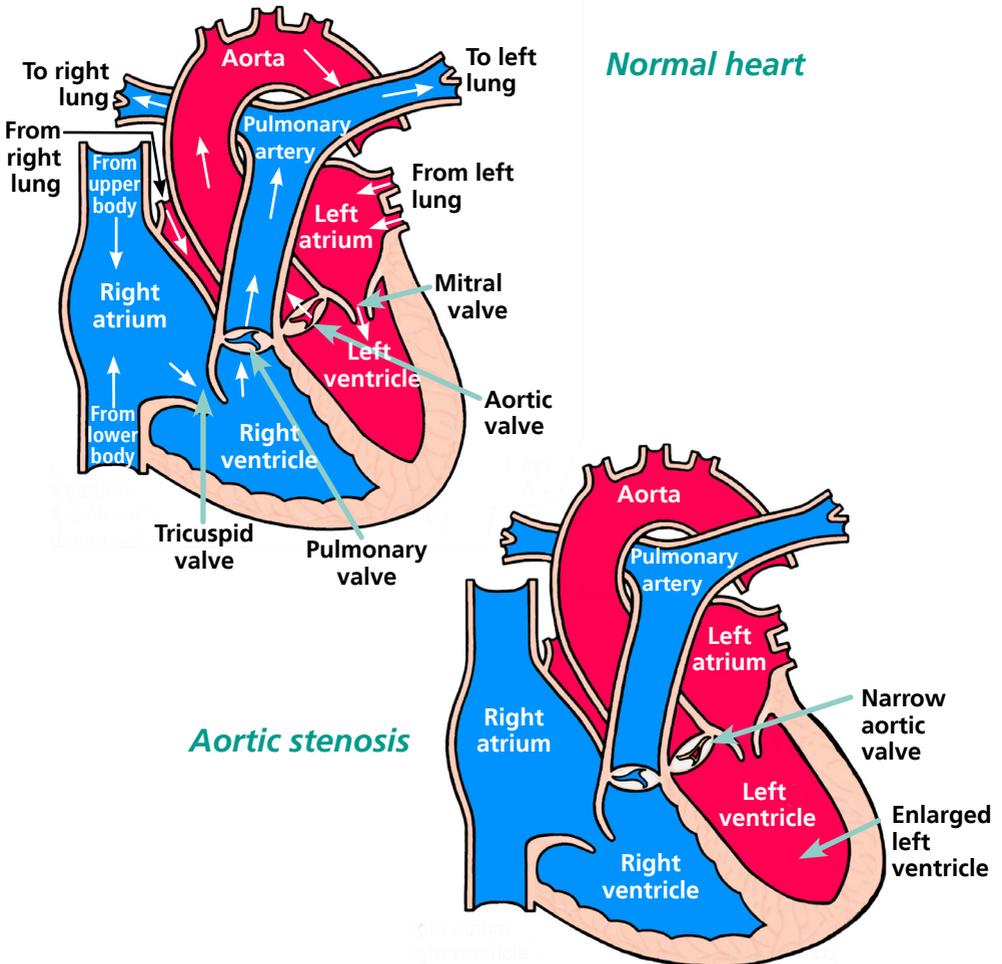


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Aortic stenosis is an obstruction in the heart caused by a narrow aortic valve between the left ventricle and aorta.

When the aortic valve is narrowed, the muscle of the main pumping chamber has to work harder and the muscle becomes thickened. The left ventricle compensates by increasing in size and this is why many people can still maintain a good exercise performance.



Almost all patients with Aortic stenosis will need surgery at some stage in their life. This will depend on the severity of the narrowing and how well the heart is coping with the extra work of pumping blood through the narrowed valve.

Aortic stenosis may progress, especially during adolescence, requiring 6-12 monthly reviews with the cardiologist.

There are varying grades of stenosis (narrowing) ranging from mild to moderate to severe – each child is different.

If the valve is mildly narrowed the heart copes very well, but if the narrowing is severe the heart cannot pump normally and this can limit how much exercise a patient can manage.

Risks

Hard exercise will increase the work and oxygen demands of the heart muscle. The left ventricle may be unable to meet the demands resulting in an inadequate oxygen delivery to the heart and muscles.

Activities to avoid include:

- Bleep Test
- **Strenuous** cross-country running
- Sprint running
- **Competitive** level rugby/football/basketball or similar team sports
- No lifting heavy weights above 10kg
- No sport that requires maximal/near maximal effort for >30 seconds
- No sport requiring significant isometric effort

Moderate level activities and participation in PE are to be encouraged as much as possible provided the child is allowed to rest when necessary.

Any symptoms during exercise such as dizziness, chest pain, palpitations, inappropriate shortness of breath, paleness and/or clamminess must be reported to the parents.

In the rare case of a medical emergency, the usual first aid procedures should be followed.



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