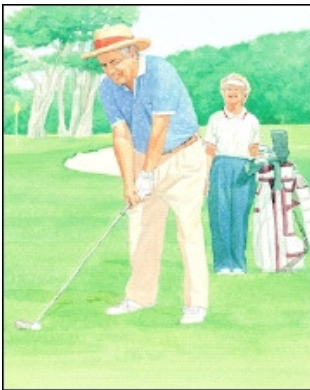


Heart Valve Problems: Aortic Stenosis

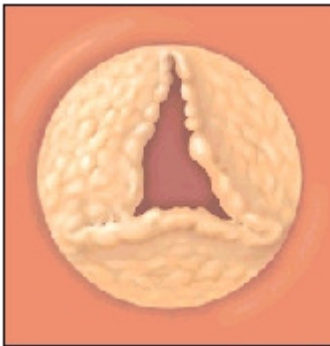
Aortic stenosis means your aortic valve has a problem opening. The left ventricle has to work harder to push the blood through the valve. In some cases, this extra work will make the muscle of the ventricle thicken. In time, the extra work can tire the heart and cause the heart muscle to weaken. This type of stenosis can quickly get worse.

Possible Causes

Deposits can form on the aortic valve as you get older. These deposits make the valve stiff and hard to open. In some cases, you may have been born with a problem aortic valve. Or, your aortic valve may have been damaged by rheumatic fever or a heart infection.



Aortic stenosis is most common in older people.



Open aortic valve with stenosis (viewed from above).

Treating Aortic Stenosis

In many cases, treatment won't be needed unless you have symptoms. If you do have symptoms, medications may help relieve them. If the stenosis is severe, your doctor may recommend surgery to replace the valve, even if you don't have symptoms.