Heart Valve Problems: Mitral Valve Prolapse

Mitral valve prolapse is a common heart valve problem. With this condition, the valve that separates the chambers of the left side of the heart doesn’t open and close properly.

Typically, this does not cause a problem and requires no treatment. But sometimes, the valve cannot keep blood moving in one direction and a tiny amount leaks backward. Most cases of mitral valve prolapse are not serious. But in some cases, the condition progresses to a serious problem that requires surgery.

Symptoms of Mitral Valve Prolapse

Mitral valve prolapse may not cause symptoms. If you do have symptoms, you may feel one or more of the following:

- Mild chest pain
- Pounding or racing heart (palpitations)
- Shortness of breath when lying down
- Trouble breathing with activity

Possible Causes

Mitral valve prolapse is often present from birth. Or it develops later in life because of wear and tear or other health problems. In some cases, the condition is inherited (passed down from your parents).

Treating Mitral Valve Prolapse

Mitral valve prolapse rarely needs treatment, unless symptoms are severe. Medications can help relieve symptoms. Your doctor may ask you to come in from time to time for tests to check your heart valve and to be sure the problem hasn’t gotten worse.