



Heart Valve
VOICE

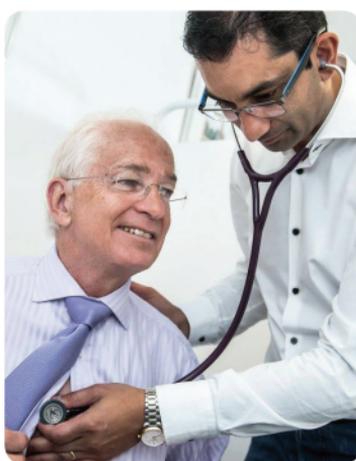


Giving a *voice* to people
with **heart valve disease**

Welcome

Heart Valve Voice are raising awareness of heart valve disease in the UK. We aim to help sufferers recognise the symptoms, and get timely diagnosis and effective treatment, enabling them to live longer, healthier lives.

The more *we listen*,
the more **lives we save**



About us

Heart Valve Voice was formed in 2013 to raise awareness of the under-diagnosis and under-treatment of heart valve disease in the UK, and to ensure that patients receive the best possible care. The charity, led by patients and patients' societies – along with specialist cardiologists and cardiac surgeons – now has teams of ambassadors throughout the UK.

Aims and objectives

Below are the six fundamental objectives that drive all of the work we do:

- 1 Raise awareness of the symptoms and severity of heart valve disease in the UK in order to save lives and improve quality of life.
- 2 Increase the awareness of symptoms of heart valve disease such as breathlessness and dizziness and improve diagnosis.
- 3 Work towards ensuring there is a clear and effective treatment pathway between primary care, secondary care and expert heart teams to ensure more effective management of the disease.
- 4 Effectively campaign for early diagnosis and treatment of heart valve disease across the UK.
- 5 Provide credible, independent and practical advice and information about heart valve disease to all those concerned with the disease.
- 6 Represent the UK's heart valve patients to help ensure that they receive the best treatment at the right time to help improve quality of life and overall outcome for each individual.



Terry's Heart Valve Disease Story

Terry works as a midwife so was used to seeing stethoscopes. But while having the pre-operative assessment for her knee replacement, her nurse spotted a heart murmur, which led to the diagnosis of heart valve disease. Terry had a successful aortic valve replacement in 2015 and is now back at work, supporting the NHS and delivering babies.

What is heart valve disease?

Heart valve disease is the name given to any malfunction or abnormality affecting the blood flow through of one or more of the heart's four valves. The condition is usually caused by wear, disease or damage of the heart valve(s).

When working properly, the heart valves ensure that blood flows in the right direction. Diseased or defective heart valves – those that have become narrowed (stenosis) or leaky (regurgitation), or both – may not open or close properly, which can interfere with the flow of blood.

Heart valve disease is linked with ageing. When left untreated, there is only a 50% chance of survival after 2 years if the condition becomes severe.



What are the symptoms?

Symptoms usually present in older people, and are often mistaken for the natural signs of ageing. Signs of heart valve disease include, but are not limited to:

- Shortness of breath
- Fainting
- Cough
- Chest tightness and/or pain
- Fatigue
- Light-headedness or dizziness
- Abnormal heart rhythm sensations (irregular heart beat)

Diagnosis

If a doctor suspects that a patient has heart valve disease, initial investigation is as simple as listening to the heart with a stethoscope: if a 'murmur' or 'click-murmur' is detected, it could indicate heart valve disease.

An echocardiogram can then be carried out to understand the exact type of heart valve disease and the severity of the abnormality.

If you're concerned you may be suffering from heart valve disease, go and see your GP to get checked out.

Treatment

If diagnosed early, heart valve disease can usually be treated effectively and patients can regain a normal quality of life. The three main treatment options for heart valve disease are:

- **Repair** – the diseased valve can sometimes be repaired surgically using a ring
- **Surgical replacement** – the diseased valve is replaced with a mechanical or natural tissue valve
- **TAVI** – allows a new valve to be implanted via a catheter through a small nick in the groin

The normal recovery time after heart valve surgery is usually 6 to 8 weeks, and may even be shorter after minimally invasive treatments such as TAVI.



Winifred's Heart Valve Disease Story

Winifred is 84 years old and began to feel breathless and tired, she put it down to ageing. She was diagnosed with heart valve disease after a GP used a stethoscope to listen to her heart. She had the procedure called TAVI and since then she's found it easier to breathe and she's been able to walk further. She's back to having an active social life and enjoys going for lunch with her friends.

Voice your support

Why not join the growing group of people who are voicing their support for our campaign to raise awareness of heart valve disease? Visit our website: heartvalvevoice.org

  @HeartValveVoice



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