Consultation Guide

Heart Valve VOICE

If you've been diagnosed with heart disease, there are key questions that you should be included in your discussion with your valve disease team during your next appointment.

These questions help ensure that you and your clinician have a productive conversation so that you are confident that decisions are shared.

Heart Valve Voice has separated the questions for different types of appointments.

Primary Care Questions

1 How often should I ask for my GP to check the heart murmur?

2 Where can I get more information or support about my condition?

3 When should I expect to hear next from the hospital and where am I being referred to next

4 What should I do if I don't hear anything?

5 Should I restrict my physical activity because of a heart murmur?

6 What changes should I be looking out for? What should I do if things get worse?

7 What other illnesses should I be aware of that relates to my heart valve disease?

Notes

The more we listen, the more lives we save

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Diagnostic Questions

1 Is my heart murmur due to a leaky (regurgitation) or tight (stenosis) heart valve? What is happening in my heart?

2 What are the symptoms of the type of heart valve disease I've been diagnosed with?

3 How severe is my heart valve disease?

4 How often will I need echocardiograms to monitor the severity of my valve disease?

5 Should I limit my physical activity due to my heart valve disease?

6 What lifestyle changes should I make because of my heart valve disease?

7 When do you think the appropriate timing is to treat my heart valve disease?

8 Will I need some form of surgery or are there alternatives?

9 Are there any medications that I should stop taking after being diagnosed with heart valve disease?

10 Ask if I can have a copy of my test results? (Consider taking a photo on your phone).

11 Who is in charge of my treatment at this moment in time?

Notes

Treatment Considerations

1 What alternatives are there to open heart surgery and are they available to me?

2 What will happen if I don't receive any treatment?

3 Can I have my treatment with smaller incisions or via transcatheter?

4 What are the benefits and risks of this treatment versus medication therapy?

5 Am I a good candidate for less invasive treatment approaches for mitral valve stenosis, such as a Transcatheter Aortic Valve implantation (TAVI) or Minimally invasive surgery (MIS)? Can you explain why not?

6 How many MIS procedures does this hospital carry out? How does it compare to other hospitals?

7 What's the difference between a mechanical valve, tissue valve and a repair?

8 What is the pros and cons for each type of valve device? How long will my valve last?

9 What will happen in the operating room?

10 How long do you expect the treatment to last?

11 Are there things I should do to prepare for my treatment?

12 How large will my incision(s) be?

Notes

Post Treatment Reassurance

1 What is it like in the intensive care unit?

2 How much pain should I expect and how will it be managed?

3 How long will I be in the hospital?

4 How much help will I need after discharge?

5 Will I be on medications after the treatment?

6 When will I start cardiac rehab and how much time will it require?

7 When should I start thinking about a second procedure and what symptoms should I look out for if there is a deterioration in my valve?

8 What information do I need to share with my dentist or any other clinician in the future?

9 I need transport to the hospital/home from the hospital – how can I arrange this?

Notes

Aortic Valve

1 Is it only the aortic valve, how are my other valves?

2 What symptoms of aortic valve regurgitation/stenosis would push me towards having my valve repaired?

3 How common is Aortic valve regurgitation/stenosis?

4 Is it only the Aortic valve, how are my other valves?

Notes

There are several types of Heart Valve Disease which need different types of treatments. Therefore Heart Valve Voice has provided specific questions based on what valve disease you've been diagnosed with.

Mitral Valve

1 Can you be specific, which type of mitral valve disease do I have?

2 How common is mitral valve regurgitation/stenosis?

3 Is it only the mitral valve, how are my other valves?

4 Does mitral valve disease make having other valve defects more likely?

5 How is mitral valve regurgitation/stenosis monitored over time?

6 What changes happen to the heart after having mitral regurgitation/stenosis over time?

7 What are the treatment options for mitral valve disease?

Notes

Bicuspid Valve and Tricuspid

1 What is the difference between bicuspid and tricuspid?

2 Is my valve bicuspid? If so, how does this predispose me to aortic stenosis?

Notes

Endocarditis

1 What are the symptoms of endocarditis?

2 What specifically caused my endocarditis?

3 Can endocarditis affect my other organs such as my kidneys, brain, lungs and skin?

4 What factors are you considering in determining the timing and type of cardiac surgery for my endocarditis?

5 For how long do I need to take antibiotics for endocarditis?

6 What are the side-effects of these antibiotics?

7 Is endocarditis different when it affects prosthetic valves as compared with native heart valves?

8 Should I take antibiotics before dental procedures to prevent endocarditis?

9 Should I restrict my physical activity because of endocarditis?

Notes

*Heart Valve Voice is providing suggested questions and symptoms of heart valve disease in order to help patients speak to their GP. This resource is by no way conclusive and should not be used to self-diagnose heart valve disease or other conditions.