

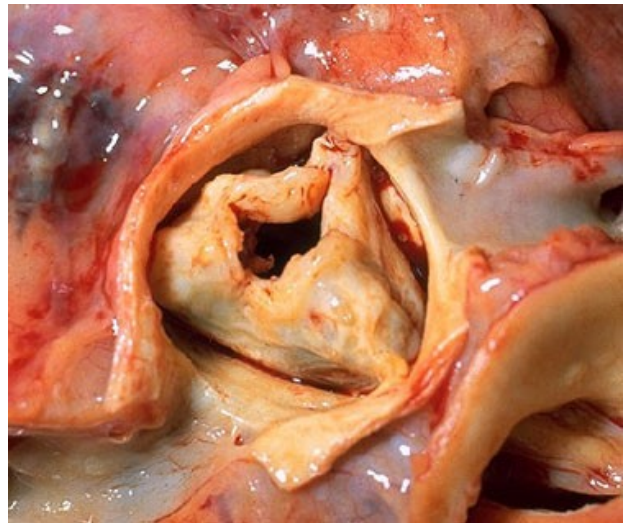
Health Minute™

Aortic Valve Stenosis

Barbara Bush and Robin Williams have brought attention to a heart condition called aortic valve stenosis. The aortic valve controls the flow of blood from the left ventricle of the heart to the aorta, the main artery of the body. The valve becomes narrow, making it harder for the heart to pump blood to the body. Narrowed valves need to be replaced via open-heart surgery. The old valve is removed and replaced with a mechanical or tissue valve (made from a pig or cow). As serious as open-heart surgery sounds, it has become a safe and common procedure with 17,592 aortic valve replacements done in 2007.



Normal Aortic Valve



Aortic Valve with Stenosis

Causes of Aortic Valve Stenosis	Symptoms of Aortic Valve Stenosis
<p>Calcium buildup over time – causes of this include smoking, high cholesterol, uncontrolled high blood pressure, or diabetes.</p> <p>A congenital defect called a bicuspid aortic valve. A normal aortic valve has three leaflets. An bicuspid aortic valve only has two.</p> <p>Rheumatic fever or endocarditis – types of infections that affect the aortic valve.</p>	<p>Symptoms do not show up until the valve is about ¼ of its normal diameter</p> <p>Chest pain (angina) that is worse with work or exertion</p> <p>Feeling dizzy or faint after you have been active</p> <p>Feeling short of breath with work or exertion</p> <p>Aortic valve stenosis can be identified with an echocardiogram (ultrasound of the heart) which is one of the many tests performed at our Center for Health.</p>