



# Heart Murmur

## What is a heart murmur?

A heart murmur is a sound caused by the blood flowing through the heart. It could be due to exertion (exercise) in a normal heart or due to structural abnormalities in a diseased heart. The murmur can be heard when your doctor listens to your heart with a stethoscope. It can be a whooshing or swishing noise heard between heartbeats. Some heart murmurs are harmless and cause no symptoms. However, abnormal murmurs can point to a bigger heart problem, such as a congenital heart defect present from birth, or heart valve disease. Depending on the cause of the murmur, it may be accompanied by shortness of breath, dizziness or fainting, bluish skin, or a chronic cough.

## How is it diagnosed?

Listening to your chest with a stethoscope is the first step. The doctor can not only hear the murmur but may be able to make a diagnosis from the way it sounds. After this finding, you will need to visit a cardiologist who will order an echocardiogram to review the heart structure and function.

## How is it treated?

A heart murmur could be benign (innocent) or abnormal; a more serious heart condition that may require follow-up, medicines, cardiac catheterization, or surgery. Treatment strategies depend on the severity of the heart condition.