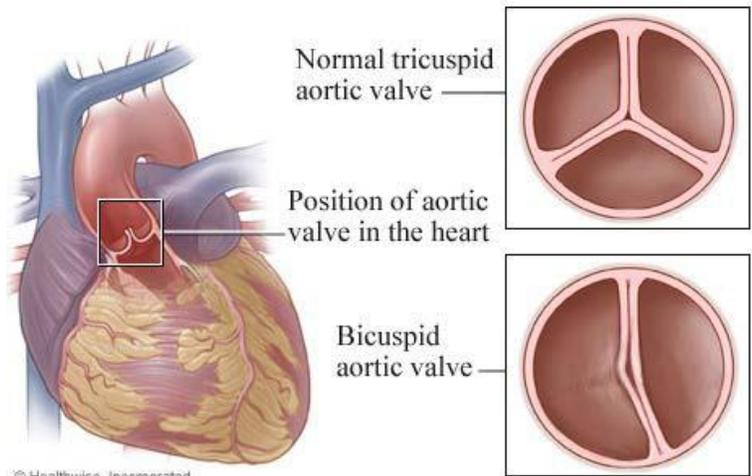


Bicuspid Aortic Valve

What is a bicuspid aortic valve?

The aortic valve controls the flow of blood from the left ventricle of the heart to the aorta. The aorta is the large blood vessel that delivers blood to the body.

A normal aortic valve has three leaflets that open and close easily. A bicuspid aortic valve has only two leaflets. This is a common heart defect that can run in families.



How does it affect my child?

Most often, a bicuspid aortic valve does not cause problems in young children. The flow of blood through the bicuspid aortic valve often makes an extra sound called a heart murmur.

Some problems that can occur as children grow or as adults are:

- Aortic regurgitation. The valve stops being able to close tightly. This lets blood leak backwards into the heart.
- Aortic stenosis. The valve gets stiff and does not open widely.
- Aortic dilatation. The aorta gets bigger.

How is it treated?

Treatment will depend on any problems and how severe they are. Your child will need to see a pediatric cardiologist from time to time to watch for problems.

Routine tests will be done to check for problems that are starting. These include ultrasounds of the heart, EKGs, and stress tests. These tests look at what the heart looks like (structure). They also look at how the heart is working (function).

Problems such as aortic stenosis often do not get worse for many years. If problems get worse, your healthcare provider will talk with you about treatment which may include surgery.

How will this affect my child?

Children with bicuspid aortic valve problems often lead normal, full lives. Activities are not limited unless there are problems.

Your child does not need medicine before going to the dentist.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any concerns or if your child has special health care needs not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.