

What are the stages of HCM?

STAGE
A

Cats at risk of developing cardiomyopathy

STAGE
B1

Subclinical cats with normal or mild left atrial enlargement (low risk)

STAGE
B2

Cats with moderate/severe left atrial enlargement (high risk)

STAGE
C

Cats with current or prior history of congestive heart failure (CHF) or aortic thromboembolism (ATE), when either one or both hind legs get paralyzed due to blood clot

STAGE
D

Cats no longer respond to medical treatment

Studies report that 15% of cats develop heart diseases.

50% of these cases are HCM.



How can I monitor my cat?

There are things that you can do to support your vet's effort and monitor your cat

You can start by monitoring your cat's sleeping or resting respiratory rate (SRR) regularly at home by counting the number of breaths your pet is taking in one minute. This will help you understand how stable he is. Normal SRR is under 30 breaths per minute. Consistently elevated SRR of over 35 breaths per minute can suggest fluid in the lungs. You may need to contact your vet for further investigations.

Follow-ups and repeat investigations are required as MVD is a progressive disease. Hence your commitment is absolutely vital. Repeat heart ultrasounds are recommended every 6-12 months to monitor your pet's heart and disease progression.

Compliance to medications is very vital.

Scan for taking the CHF Symptom Checker Test



This material is for informational purposes only. It does not replace the advice of a veterinarian. Talk to your vet, and visit www.savavet.com for more information.



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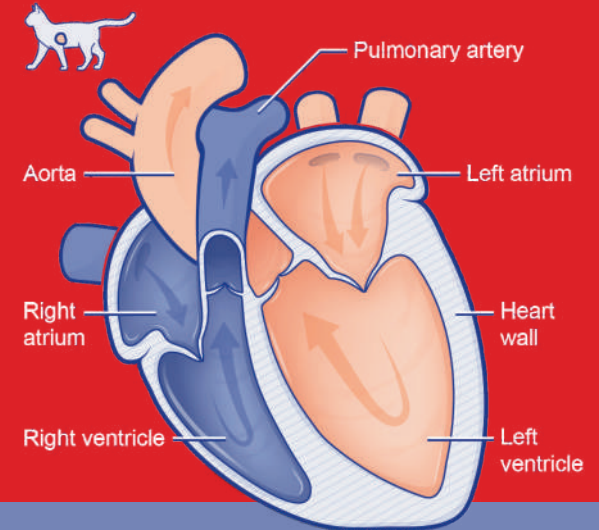
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Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM) in cats



The **most common type of heart disease in cats is Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy**. It is caused by the thickening of the heart muscle. Pedigree and non-pedigree breeds of cats get HCM. Among the pedigree cat breeds, Bengals, Maine Coons, British Shorthairs, and Persians are diagnosed with HCM most commonly.

In most of the cases, the cause is unknown. However, age is considered as a very important factor for the development of HCM in cats. Co-morbidity is also a risk factor for the development of HCM. In older cats, sometimes, hyperthyroidism and high blood pressure may lead to heart muscle thickening.

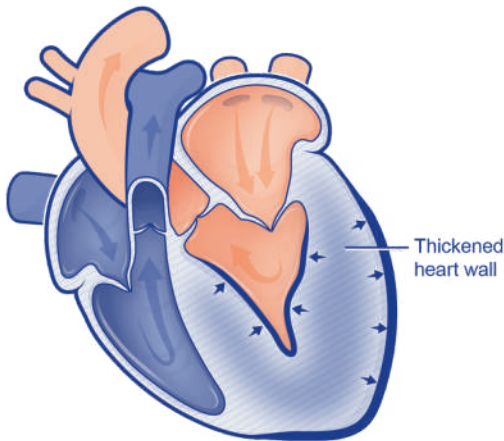
What are the symptoms of HCM?

Cats with HCM show different symptoms on the severity of the disease as the heart disease progresses. In the early stages of HCM, cats may remain asymptomatic for months or even years, if the disease progresses slowly. This stage is called **asymptomatic HCM**.

Over time, when the disease progresses to more advanced stages, cats may start showing symptoms like difficulty in breathing due to the accumulation of fluid within or around the lungs. Cats may get paralyzed in their hind legs due to a blood clot or may even collapse due to abnormal heart rhythms. This stage is called **symptomatic HCM**.

If your cat has been diagnosed with HCM and has no symptoms as yet, it is important for you to know that symptoms can develop later and hence it is critical to monitor your cat closely and get regular check-ups done by your vet.

Heart of cat with HCM



Symptoms include:

- Lethargy or weakness
- Loss of appetite
- Difficulty breathing
- Rapid breathing during periods of rest
- Exercise intolerance
- Chronic coughing
- Fainting or collapse
- Sudden hind-leg paralysis

Do cats with HCM develop blood clots?

Some cats with HCM may develop blood clots in the heart, which may get pumped around the body. They may then block blood vessels and obstruct flow of blood. An emergency may arise, when the blood clots affect the hind legs causing paralysis and pain of either one or both the hind legs.

How is HCM diagnosed?

Your vet may detect a heart murmur or an abnormal heart rhythm and may suspect HCM. Typically, your vet may recommend **echocardiography or an ultrasound of the heart**. This procedure is completely painless. Your cat will need to lie on its side and remain still. A mild sedation may be used to help the cat relax. Fur is removed on both sides of the cat's chest and a gel is applied. This will help in getting a clear ultrasound image. The whole procedure takes upto 60 minutes and your pet will be closely monitored throughout. Other tests that may be recommended are chest **X-rays**, (to assess presence of fluid in and around the lungs), **blood tests** and **blood pressure monitoring**.

Heart Ultrasound procedure



Can medications treat HCM?

No, **heart medications can neither treat nor prevent HCM**. Meaning, once the heart muscles have thickened, there is no way you can treat or reverse them. However, they can help improve the quality of life of cats by controlling and reducing the risk of symptoms. **Heart medications that your vet will recommend may also help in delaying the rate of progression of the disease**. Other medications provide nutritional support to your cat's heart.

Your cat may also need a **diuretic**, a medication that is used to remove excess fluid from the body and help them breathe comfortably. Other medications that may be recommended include drugs to reduce blood pressure, **drugs to reduce clot formation in the heart** and **drugs for over-active thyroid gland**, if these conditions are diagnosed.