

# Percutaneous balloon aortic valvuloplasty

Your doctor has recommended a procedure called a percutaneous balloon aortic valvuloplasty.

You might not have heard this medical term before now and may be feeling unsure about the nature of the procedure.

This information sheet outlines what the procedure is and what risks are involved.

You might still have questions after you read this information sheet. If you do, please contact the team at Heart HQ. We're here to help.

## 1. What's a percutaneous balloon aortic valvuloplasty?

The aortic valve is very important to your health because it controls the amount of blood that leaves your heart to be pumped around the body.

Sometimes the valve can narrow due to disease. This means the blood can't flow freely from the heart and supply your body. This is called aortic stenosis, and can be a common problem as you get older. If you suffer from aortic stenosis, you may experience chest pain, fainting or shortness of breath.

A valvuloplasty is a procedure that widens the valve using a balloon, allowing blood to flow more easily. The procedure will start with an intravenous line (IV) being put into your arm. An IV is simply a needle with a tube attached. You will receive an injection of local anaesthetic before a catheter (a very fine tube) is placed into a vein in your groin or wrist. Sometimes a sedative will also be given.

The valvuloplasty involves passing a wire through a blood vessel up to your heart until it reaches the aortic valve.

Your doctor will use x-rays to see the wire. Once the wire is in place, a balloon will be passed along the wire and into the damaged valve. The balloon will

then be pumped up where the valve is narrowed to widen it and release the blood flow. The balloon may be pumped up several times during the procedure.

Once finished, the wire and balloon will be removed. It should be noted that often the valve is very badly damaged by disease and this procedure will not completely get rid of all the narrowing. It is really designed to provide some short-term relief and is not a long-term cure.

In most cases this temporary repair will last six to twelve months and problems are most like to return within one to three years. Depending on your situation, another procedure may be needed. If you've been recommended for this procedure, you are not suitable for heart surgery.

## 2. What kind of risks are associated with this procedure?

Any kind of procedure carries some element of risk, often very small and rare.

In recommending this procedure, your doctor has balanced the benefits and risks of carrying out the test against the benefits and risks of not proceeding. If the recommendation is to undertake this procedure, then your doctor believes there is benefit to going ahead.

It's important you understand the risks involved so you can make an informed decision.

Here are the most commonly reported risks and complications associated with a percutaneous balloon aortic valvuloplasty.

### Common risks and complications (more than 5% of cases)

- Minor bruising at the puncture site
- Abnormal heartbeat lasting several seconds, which settles by itself
- Major bruising and swelling at the groin/arm puncture site
- A stroke—this can cause long term disability
- Death is possible following the procedure or due to the underlying heart condition

### Uncommon risks and complications (1–5% of cases)

- Abnormal heart rhythm that continues for a long

## World-class cardiac care

 07 5414 1100  07 5414 1101  admin@hearthq.com.au

**Heart HQ Central Sippy Downs**  
Suite 5, Atria  
44 Central Drive  
Sippy Downs QLD 4556

**Birtinya**  
Suite 4, Ground Floor  
Sunshine Coast University  
Private Hospital  
3 Doherty Street  
Birtinya QLD 4575

**Noosa–Tewantin**  
Suite 1  
66 Poinciana Avenue  
Tewantin QLD 4565

**Gympie**  
Ramsay Medical  
Consulting Suites  
70–72 Channon Street  
Gympie QLD 4570

**Buderim**  
Buderim Private Hospital  
12 Elsa Wilson Drive  
Buderim QLD 4556

**Caboolture**  
Consulting Suites  
Caboolture Private Hospital  
McKean Street  
Caboolture QLD 4510

**Nambour**  
Nambour Selangor  
Private Hospital  
62 Netherton Street  
Nambour QLD 4560

time—this may need an electric shock to correct

- Embolism—a blood clot may form and break off from the catheter which will be treated with blood thinning medication
- The valve may leak or can be damaged

**Rare risks and complications  
(less than 1% of cases)**

- Heart attack
- Loss of kidney function due to the side effects of the x-ray dye
- Infection—this will need antibiotics
- An allergic reaction to the x-ray dye
- A higher lifetime risk from x-ray exposure
- A hole is accidentally made in the heart or heart valve—this will need surgery to repair
- Damage to the nerve in the leg
- Emergency heart surgery due to complications with this procedure
- Skin injury from radiation, causing reddening of the skin

### Our commitment to you

As a patient of Heart HQ, you can be assured we will always strive to act in your best interests and we will only recommend tests and procedures we believe will benefit you.

Everyone has questions, and we want to answer yours. Please contact your doctor to discuss any concerns you might have.

## World-class cardiac care

 07 5414 1100  07 5414 1101  [admin@hearthq.com.au](mailto:admin@hearthq.com.au)

**Heart HQ Central  
Sippy Downs**  
Suite 5, Atria  
44 Central Drive  
Sippy Downs QLD 4556

**Birtinya**  
Suite 4, Ground Floor  
Sunshine Coast University  
Private Hospital  
3 Doherty Street  
Birtinya QLD 4575

**Noosa–Tewantin**  
Suite 1  
66 Poinciana Avenue  
Tewantin QLD 4565

**Gympie**  
Ramsay Medical  
Consulting Suites  
70–72 Channon Street  
Gympie QLD 4570

**Buderim**  
Buderim Private Hospital  
12 Elsa Wilson Drive  
Buderim QLD 4556

**Caboolture**  
Consulting Suites  
Caboolture Private Hospital  
McKean Street  
Caboolture QLD 4510

**Nambour**  
Nambour Selangor  
Private Hospital  
62 Netherton Street  
Nambour QLD 4560