

# Aortic Stenosis & COVID-19: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

If you have an underlying heart condition such as aortic stenosis, you may face a higher risk for complications if you get COVID-19. But with planning, you can manage your risk and remain healthy. Stay informed and stay in touch with your health care team.



## What are the risks of having your valve procedure (TAVR/TAVI) during the pandemic versus waiting?

Hospitals are following special precautions and protocols to keep you as safe as possible. But the risk of getting COVID-19 in the hospital or after you return home should be balanced with the risk of waiting to have a procedure until the COVID-19 infection rates are lower.

Your doctor will discuss these risks with you and make a recommendation. Contact your health care team to learn more about specific safety procedures in place to protect patients like you.

## Should I reschedule my appointment, surgery or procedure?

Hospitals and physicians are continually evaluating the situation in light of COVID-19. It's important to actively monitor your condition and stay in touch with your health care team to decide whether you need treatment for your AS right away or if it's OK to wait.

Talk with your heart doctor to share updates on symptoms and ask questions to ensure the most up-to-date information is considered. Your doctor will decide to proceed with treatment or to continue monitoring based on factors such as:

- Symptoms (but remember that they're not always obvious)
- Latest echo (echocardiogram) results
- Frequency of hospitalizations
- Other medical conditions





## Am I at a greater risk of worsening symptoms if I get COVID-19?

COVID-19 should not affect the severity of aortic stenosis. However, because COVID-19 and aortic stenosis can both be causing breathing problems, it's important to report any new or worsening symptoms to your health care team. While anyone can get COVID-19, people with underlying medical conditions face a greater risk for developing serious illness with the virus.

## Manage Your Risk

Pay close attention to symptoms such as:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

As someone with AS, you may already have shortness of breath, but if you also have COVID-19, the shortness of breath may be worse. **If you develop new or worsening shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, seek medical care immediately.**

## How can I stay prepared for an upcoming surgery or procedure?

- Maintain good nutrition and adequate sleep.** The healthier you are before your surgery/procedure, the quicker the recovery. That could mean fewer complications, less time in the hospital and faster recovery after returning home.
- Monitor your AS symptoms, stay in touch with your heart team and report any change in symptoms.** Your health care team will arrange telehealth visits as needed. Be sure to notify your doctor if your symptoms start to worsen so scheduling of the surgery/procedure can be adjusted based on the severity of your symptoms.
- Check your temperature daily and let your health care team know if it's over 100 degrees.** Many places are also testing patients for COVID-19 before coming in for these procedures.
- While these are uncertain times, if you have been referred for aortic valve surgery, it's critical that you continue to seek appropriate, timely care.** Do not let fear delay necessary care.
- Contact your health care team** to learn more about the safety procedures and precautions they're taking for treating patients with severe aortic stenosis during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information on preventing exposure to COVID-19, follow the **CDC guidelines** and learn more at **[cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)**.