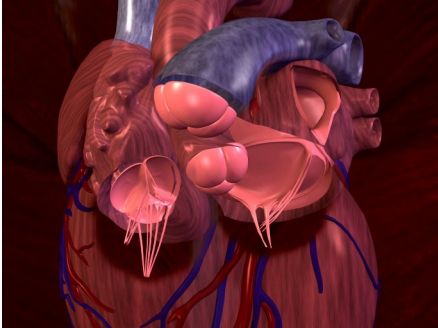


## Mitral valve



The mitral valve controls the flow of blood between the left atrium and the left ventricle. The left atrium is the collection chamber where the blood returns to the heart from the lungs after being oxygenated. Then it is pumped through the mitral valve to the left ventricle, which is the heart's big pumping chamber, which pumps blood to the body's organs and tissues. The mitral valve has two flaps called cusps.

These cusps are supported by cords similar to those that support parachutes and serve to prevent the valve from bulging in the opposite direction toward the atrium when the ventricle contracts. When the atrium contracts, the mitral valve opens to allow the blood to flow toward the ventricle. When the ventricle contracts, the mitral valve closes to prevent the blood from flowing back toward the atrium.

### Mitral valve prolapse

Mitral valve prolapse occurs when one or both flaps "prolapse," that is to say, they turn toward the atrium when the ventricle contracts. This can happen if the cusps are very large or if the cords supporting them are too long. When prolapse occurs, the valve does not close tightly and blood can leak backward through the mitral valve. The doctor can hear the mitral valve prolapse when he listens to the heart. This prolapse can cause a sound like a click. If the blood flows back (backwards) through the valve, the doctor may hear a murmur. The doctor may order a test called echocardiography to take images of the heart in order to confirm the diagnosis and see if the mitral valve leaks.

### Symptoms of mitral valve prolapse

Most patients with mitral valve prolapse have no symptoms. But some patients do have symptoms associated with mitral valve prolapse. These can include chest pain, palpitations or feeling that the heart is beating fast and skipping beats, having dizzy spells or light-headedness, shortness of breath and a feeling of panic or anxiety.

### Treatment of mitral valve prolapse

Unless there is a murmur associated with a valve that leaks or symptoms that are bothersome, no treatment is needed. The patient will not have problems and will not need treatment. However, patients who have valves that leak will need to take antibiotics before undergoing certain surgical or dental procedures to prevent the valve from becoming infected. Remind the doctor or dentist if you were diagnosed with mitral valve prolapse to see if you need antibiotics before any procedure or surgery. In the case of patients with mitral valve prolapse who

have symptoms, medications can be used. The type of medications that is used most to treat these symptoms are beta-blockers.