



University  
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# Transcatheter aortic valve implant (TAVI)

Sussex Cardiac Centre

Patient information

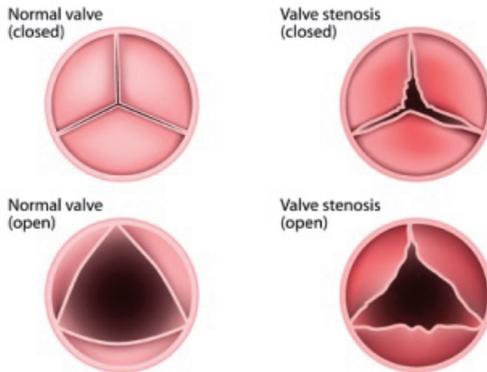
# Valvular heart disease

Your heart is a muscle which pumps blood to your lungs and around the rest of your body. There are four valves in your heart. Normally, these valves open to let blood flow through or out of your heart, and then shut to keep it from flowing backwards.

If your valve is diseased or damaged this can affect the flow of blood to your heart in two ways.

- 1 If the valve does not open fully, it will obstruct the flow of blood. This is called **valve stenosis**.
- 2 If the valve does not close properly, it will allow blood to leak backwards, in the wrong direction. This is called **valve incompetence** or **regurgitation**.

## HEART VALVE DISEASE



## What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of valvular disease vary depending on which valve is affected, they may include:

- Tiredness or breathlessness when exercising.
- Palpitations or feeling like your heart is racing.
- Chest pains or Angina.
- Spells of dizziness and fainting - this can happen if the obstruction is severe.

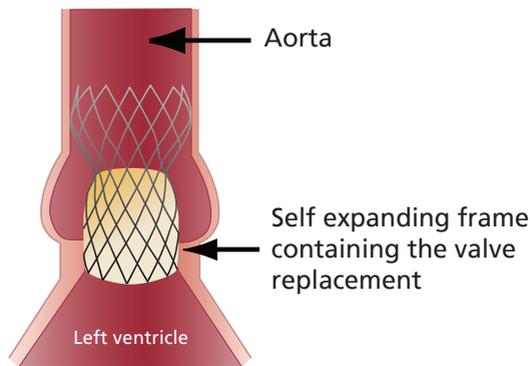
The back pressure (the effect of blood flowing backwards) can also cause shortness of breath and swelling of the ankles and legs.

## Transcatheter aortic valve implantation (TAVI)

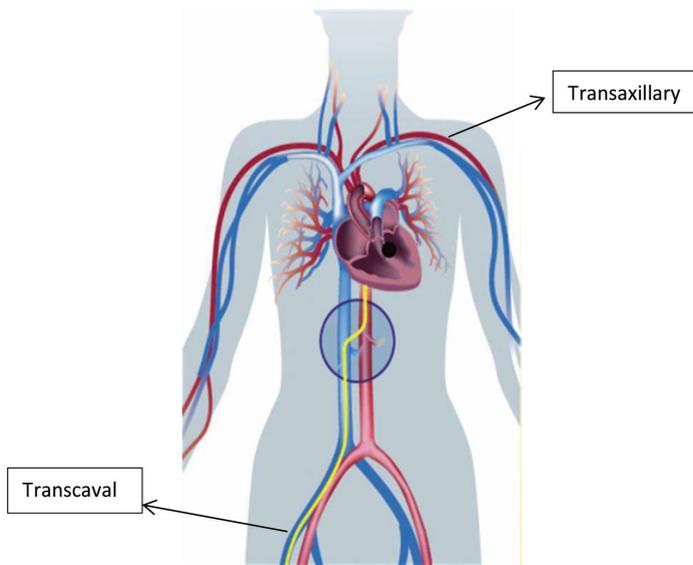
For some people one way of treating their heart problem is to insert a new aortic valve percutaneously (through an artery via the skin). A catheter is a thin hollow tube. Access to the heart will be through a catheter in the artery in the wrist, and a larger catheter in the artery on the groin.

The new aortic valve is passed through the catheter in your groin. Once the catheter reaches your heart, it is positioned in the opening of your aortic valve. The new valve either expands by itself or is expanded using a balloon. The cardiologist will close the puncture site with a device that seals your artery.

TAVI procedures are performed under local anaesthetic with or without sedation. Your consultant will discuss the best option with you.



For some patients, the approach from the artery in the leg is not possible and the valve may need to be implanted from the artery around the shoulder (Transaxillary TAVI) or through a vein in the leg (Transcaval TAVI). Use of these access points may require general anaesthetic.



## What is the new valve?

Your new valve will be made out of either Porcine (pig) or Bovine (cow) pericardium which is cut into shape and then sewn into a metallic frame which can be squeezed into a small catheter. We use several different valve types, depending on your anatomy. Some valves are put in with a balloon, others are self-expanding and some can be mechanically deployed.

## What are the risks and benefits?

The TAVI procedure has a success rate of more than 98%. It can help reduce your symptoms of shortness of breath, chest pain, dizziness and fainting.

However, as with any heart procedure there are risks, and they vary from person to person. This will be discussed by your cardiologist when you come for your appointment at the clinic and again when you come to sign the consent form.

Some patients may need a Permanent Pacemaker after the TAVI as the new valve can squash the electrical conduction system of the heart. If this is the case for you, we will usually put in a pacemaker during the first couple of days following your TAVI.

## Before the procedure

You will need to have a number of tests to see if the TAVI procedure is the right one for you. These tests may include an echocardiogram (ultrasound scan of the heart) and a CT scan.

Prior to the procedure, you will be contacted by our structural heart nurse specialist to attend a pre-admission clinic. You may also be approached about participating in a clinical trial.

The structural heart nurse will go through your medications during the pre-admission clinic. **If you are taking a warfarin/apixaban/rivaroxiban/edoxaban/dabigatran, you must STOP these 3 days prior to the procedure.**

You may be asked to come in the evening before or on the day of the procedure. The ward team will take blood samples and do an electrocardiogram (ECG) on admission. You will not be able to eat or drink for six hours before your procedure.

## After the procedure

The procedure lasts approximately one and a half hours. We will close the puncture site in your groin with a device that seals the artery. The nurse looking after you will regularly inspect your groin, check your blood pressure and check the pulses in your feet.

We will observe your heart rhythm on a cardiac monitor overnight. If all is well, you will be able to sit up on return to ward and get out of bed that evening or the following morning.

While you are in the Cardiac Care Unit (CCU) it may not always be possible to care for you with other patients who are the same sex as you because we will be using specialised equipment as part of your care. However we provide substantial screening around your bed, to preserve your privacy and dignity. There is limited space in the ward, so we suggest you do not bring too many things with you into hospital.

Before you go home we will review your medication. You may need to take Aspirin to start with and we will review this in clinic.

## Going home

If there have not been any problems, you should be able to go home the day after the procedure.

We recommend that you have someone who can stay with you for up to 2 days following discharge to help with recovery. You may need support over the next 1-2 weeks while recuperating.

Recovery at home will continue at different rates for each person. It may take a few weeks or months to feel the maximum benefits following the TAVI procedure.

If you expect problems organising your own transport home, then please contact us prior to admission as soon as you can.

## Wound care

It is normal for your groin to feel tender for a few days after the procedure. A bruise may develop with discolouration down as far as your knee.

The wound may be covered in a clear film dressing. This can be peeled off when you get home. The wound area should be kept clean and dry. We also advise you to avoid hot baths for 48 hours after discharge as this may encourage bleeding.

If you develop a hard tender lump under the skin around the wound, please contact CCU Telephone **01273 696955 Ext. 64484**. This may be the result of a collection of blood under the skin.

In the highly unlikely event of your wound starting to bleed, lie down and get a family member or friend to apply pressure to your groin. **If the bleeding does not stop in 10 minutes, call 999.**

## Activity

**We advise you not to do anything strenuous for the first week after returning home.** Avoid lifting heavy objects (e.g. shopping, suitcases) excessive pulling and pushing (e.g. cutting the grass, digging the garden, shoveling and vacuum cleaning).

Give yourself a week or two to get your strength back before returning to your everyday activities. A good starting point is to take regular walks on a daily basis. You don't have to avoid climbing stairs or walking up hills - just take them slowly and steadily at first.

After a couple of weeks you should be back doing the things you used to do. Hopefully you will find that you can do more than you could before.

## Returning to work

This will depend on many factors such as the overall state of your health and the type of work that you do. You may like to discuss this in more detail with your cardiologist or GP.

## Travel

Government rules say that you are not allowed to drive for 4 weeks following your TAVI procedure. You don't need to let the DVLA know unless you hold a commercial license, but we do advise you to tell your insurance company to avoid problems with any claims you may make in the future.

It's safe to fly 2 weeks after your TAVI, although its best to check with your airline as each has its own procedure.

## Hospital follow-up

You will have a follow up appointment with the structural heart nurse specialist after 6-8 weeks. Thereafter you will return to the care of your referring hospital, if you live outside the Brighton area.

If you have any questions, queries or concerns please do not hesitate to contact our Structural Heart Specialist Nurses – **Manuel Pellegrino and Patrick Mejia** **07769 286982**  
Email: [uhsussex.structuralheartnurses@nhs.net](mailto:uhsussex.structuralheartnurses@nhs.net)

## Useful telephone numbers/websites

### Structural Heart Nurse Specialist

**Patrick Mejia and Manuel Pellegrino**

Mobile: **07769 286982**

Email: [uhsussex.structuralheartnurses@nhs.net](mailto:uhsussex.structuralheartnurses@nhs.net)

### Cardiac Care Unit

**01273 696955 Ext. 64484**

### Cardiac Research Team

Telephone: **01273 696955 Ext. 64049**

### British Heart Foundation

Helpline: **0300 330 3311**

Email: [hearthelpline@bhf.org.uk](mailto:hearthelpline@bhf.org.uk)

Website: [www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)

### Heart Valve Voice

Website: [www.heartvalvevoice.com](http://www.heartvalvevoice.com)

This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care in Brighton & Hove or Haywards Heath

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