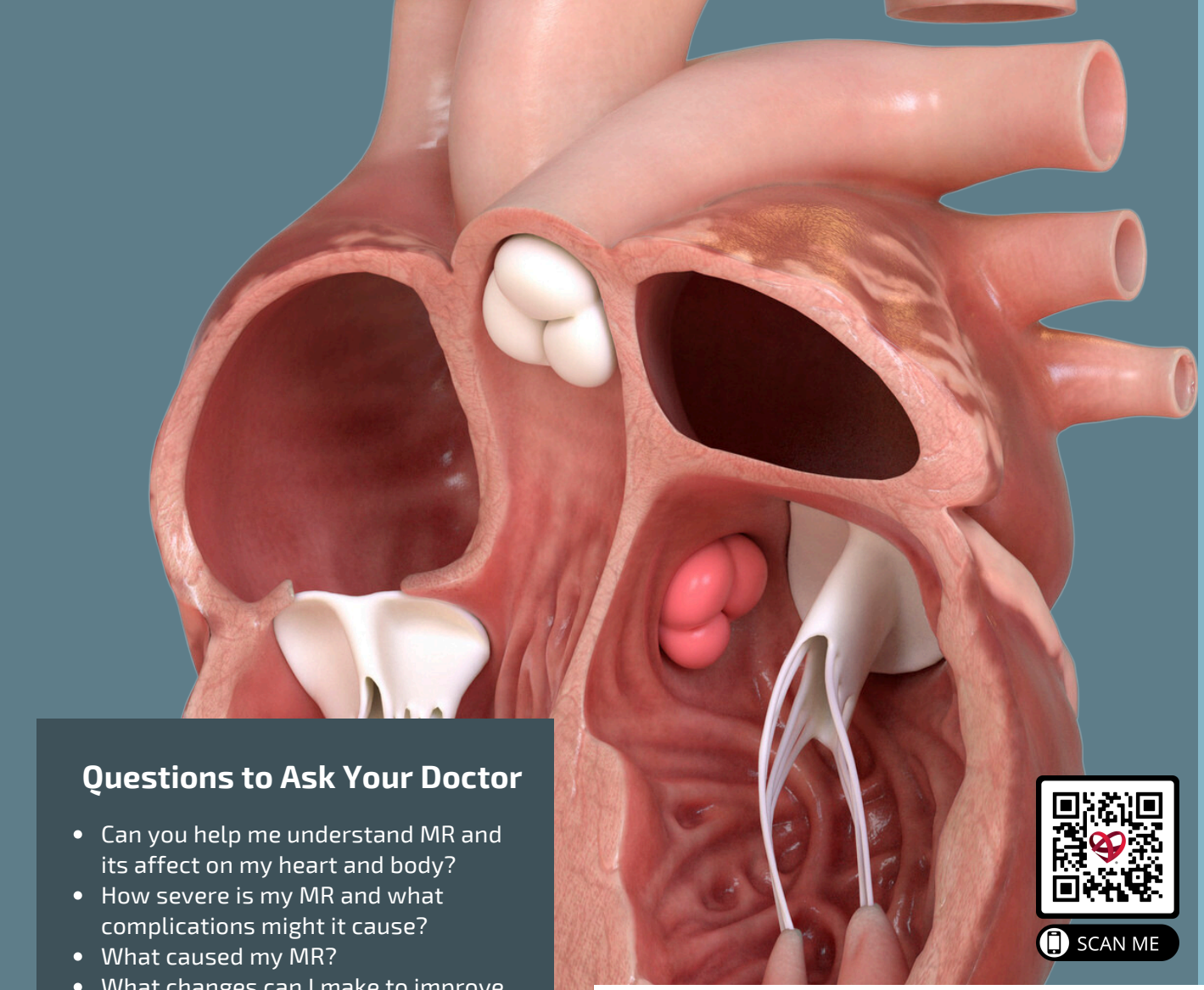


SCAN ME

Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- Can you help me understand MR and its affect on my heart and body?
- How severe is my MR and what complications might it cause?
- What caused my MR?
- What changes can I make to improve my health and reduce risks?
- Are there medications I can take, and how do they work?
- Do I need surgery or other medical procedures? What is involved?
- What are the risks and benefits of each treatment option?
- Where can I find more information to help me make the best decisions?
- What symptoms require a call to the doctor? To 911?

Living with Mitral Valve Regurgitation

Mended Hearts®

Contact Us

If you would like to receive support or need more information, please contact us at:

The Mended Hearts, Inc.
1579 US Highway 19
Leesburg, GA 31763
1-888-HEART99

info@mendedhearts.org
www.mendedhearts.org

Created through an educational grant

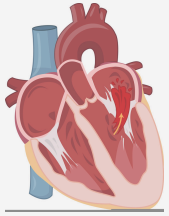
Heart-shaped logos are registered trademarks of The Mended Hearts, Inc.
© 2023-2025 The Mended Hearts, Inc. all rights reserved.

Discussion Guide for Patients & Caregivers

What is Mitral Valve Regurgitation (MR)?

The mitral valve is the valve between the top and bottom left chambers of the heart. It has two flaps that open and close to keep the blood flowing in the right direction—from the top left chamber into the bottom left chamber where it can be pumped out to the body.

Mitral valve regurgitation (MR), also called mitral valve insufficiency or mitral valve incompetence, is when the mitral valve doesn't close all the way allowing some of the blood to leak back into the top left chamber of the heart.



When the valve gets very leaky, the heart cannot pump enough blood to the body.

Causes of MR

There are several possible causes of MR. Sometimes there is a **problem with the mitral valve itself** that causes mitral valve regurgitation, but other times there are **problems with the parts of the heart that support the mitral valve** that cause the valve to be leaky. Some more common causes are:

- mitral valve prolapse where the valve flaps bulge into the left atrium
- heart attack
- congenital heart defect(s)
- cardiomyopathy
- endocarditis
- radiation therapy

Mitral valve regurgitation is the most common form of heart valve disease.

Symptoms of MR

Some people with mild or moderate mitral valve regurgitation will not have any symptoms. Some people will feel very tired (fatigued) but have no other symptoms. Some additional symptoms you may have are:

- Shortness of breath (dyspnea) when exercising or when lying down
- An irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia)
- A fast or fluttery heartbeat (palpitations)
- Unusual chest pain
- Feeling lightheaded or like you may faint
- Swelling (edema) in feet or ankles

Possible Complications of MR

As stated, MR can cause the heart to work much harder which can sometimes lead to complications including:

- irregular (often rapid) heartbeat called atrial fibrillation (AFib) that may lead to stroke
- high blood pressure in the lungs (pulmonary hypertension)
- fluid buildup in the lungs
- enlarged left ventricle
- congestive heart failure

2% of the worldwide population have some regurgitation

10% of people over 75 have some regurgitation

Treating MR

In cases of mild MR, no treatment may be needed. Your health care provider may suggest monitoring your MR. Some other treatment options may include:

Healthy lifestyle. Eating healthy foods, reducing sodium intake, exercising, controlling blood pressure, quitting smoking if you smoke and reducing stress help keep you healthy longer.

Medication. There are some medications for symptoms of MR including Beta Blockers for irregular heartbeat and chest pain and diuretics to help with fluid buildup and shortness of breath. Blood thinners may be used to prevent blood clots. Blood pressure medication may be given to lower blood pressure.

Medical Procedures.
Mitral valve repair (where possible) can often be performed by cardiac catheterization. **Balloon annuloplasty** is where the ring around the valve is tightened. **Valvuloplasty** is where a balloon is used to open a narrowed valve. A **Mitral Valve Clip** can be put on the valve to improve valve closure.

Mitral valve replacement can be done surgically or in some cases by cardiac catheterization. The diseased valve is replaced with a mechanical valve or a human, cow or pig tissue valve.