

Infective endocarditis is a bacterial infection of the inner lining of the heart muscle (endocardium). This inner lining also covers the heart valves, and it is these valves which are primarily affected by infective endocarditis. If the infection remains untreated, multiplying bacteria may eventually destroy the valves and result in heart failure. Bacteria may also form small clots (emboli) which move through the blood and block small arteries. These clots may lodge in various parts of the body including the brain and cause serious damage.