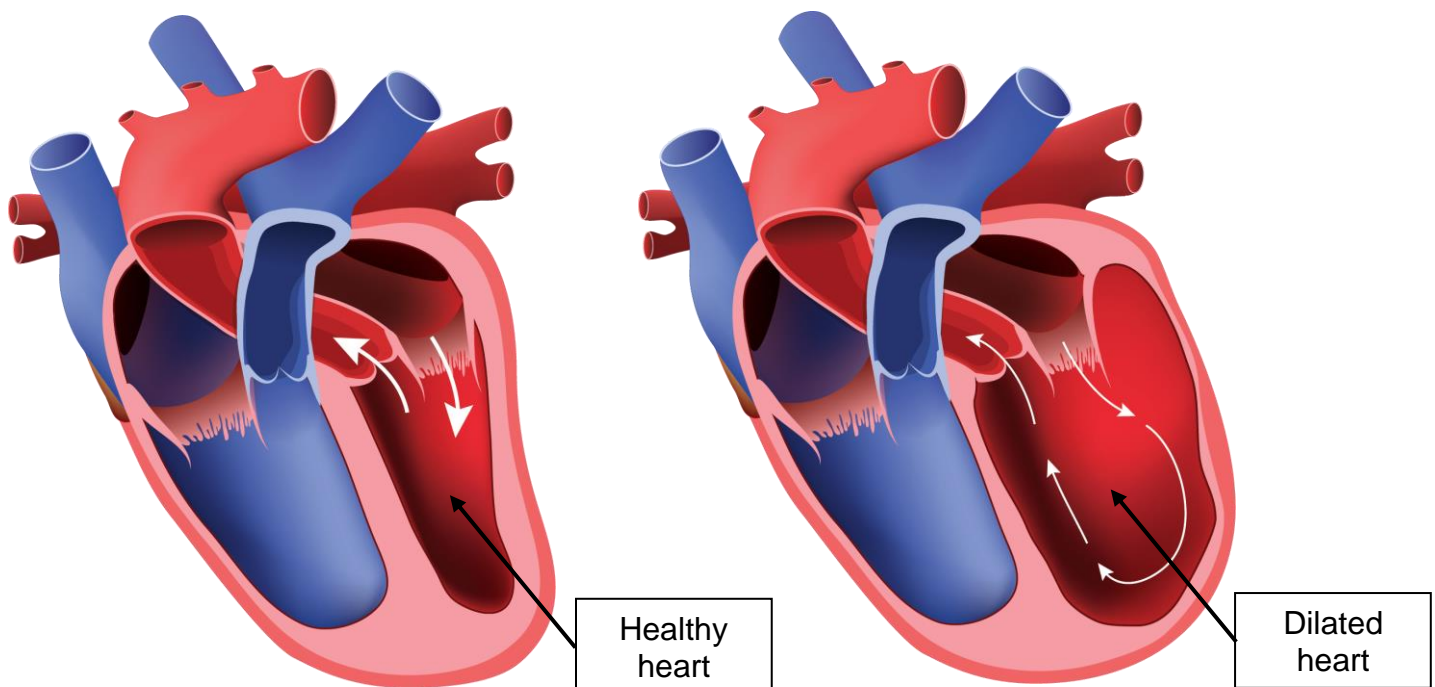


Dilated Cardiomyopathy

What is Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM)?

- Cardiomyopathy means heart muscle disease. There are different types.
- Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM) is a kind of cardiomyopathy when your left ventricle (the heart's main pumping chamber) becomes enlarged.
- The muscle wall can get thin and weak.
 - The heart may not be able to pump enough blood to keep up with all the needs of the body.













What causes DCM?

- Sometimes, DCM can happen because of a past infection called myocarditis.
- Sometimes, it is a genetic problem and the abnormal gene causing the DCM can be found from a blood or saliva test. When the genetic cause is found we can test other family members for the same problem.
- Some other diseases like muscular dystrophy, or medications like chemotherapy, can cause cardiomyopathy.
- Sometimes the cause is unknown.

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What are the signs and symptoms of DCM?

- Many people do not have symptoms until late in the disease when the heart is severely weakened.
- DCM is rare, but the symptoms are like other lung and heart conditions:

 <p>Feeling abnormally weak, tired, or unable to do routine activities</p>	 <p>Having a hard time breathing when lying down</p>	 <p>Running out of breath easily</p>	 <p>Having a poor appetite, or for infants, difficulty feeding an entire meal</p>	 <p>Swelling of the lower legs, feet, hands or around the eyes</p>
 <p>Coughing or wheezing</p>	 <p>Belly pain and/or swelling</p>	 <p>Unusual Sweating</p>	 <p>Feeling lightheaded or dizzy</p>	 <p>Passing out</p>

- As DCM gets worse, physical activity may become more difficult. You may also be more tired (fatigue), have a cough, or shortness of breath during activity.

What are some possible tests to check your heart?

The tests to diagnose or screen for DCM are:

- **Echocardiogram (ECHO)** is an ultrasound that shows a moving picture of your heart.
- **Electrocardiogram (EKG)** records the electrical activity of the heart.
- **Genetic testing** looks for conditions that cause DCM and might be passed down in families.

If I have DCM, what activities can I participate in?


- Exercise is usually recommended. Talk to your cardiologist about which exercises or activities are okay.
- For higher intensity or competitive sports (such as soccer and football), more testing and a talk with your doctor is important to understand your risk.
- When participating in any activity, it is important to rest when feeling tired.

What are possible treatments for DCM?

- Medications can lessen symptoms.
 - They can help the heart pump more easily by lowering the blood pressure in the arteries, or through other ways.
 - Diuretics (water pills) can help reduce swelling (buildup of extra water) in the lungs and body.
- If DCM is severe, and medications do not help:
 - A heart transplant may be needed
 - A machine pump may be used to help your heart pump blood.



What do I do when there is an emergency or urgent health problem?

Call 911 if you experience the following: 	Having a hard time breathing even while resting
	Having chest pain that does not get better with rest
	Feeling confused
	Difficulty waking up or unable to wake up
	Passing out

Call Your Nurse Care Manager or Cardiology Clinic when:

- You feel uncomfortable when breathing
- You are having less energy while being active
- Feeling fast or unusual heart beats
- Having new or increased chest pain
- You have belly pain or swelling
- You notice any new swelling in eyes, feet, or lower legs
- You have unexpected or unusual weight gain
- Not eating well or not wanting to eat

Who do call with questions or concerns?

Cardiology Clinic	323-361-2461	
Nurse Care Managers	Ani Yeremian 323-361-4622 ayeremian@chla.usc.edu	Lucy Dautrich 323-361-3355 lucyd@chla.usc.edu
Cardiologist On-Call	323-660-2450 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dial “0” for the Operator, ask for the Cardiologist On-Call• If after the clinic closes, on weekends and holidays	

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