

Heart Murmur ACTION PLAN



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5 Simple Steps Every Owner Should Take After a Heart Murmur Diagnosis in Your Cat

Reassurance & First Steps

Hearing your cat has a murmur can be scary — but most cats with murmurs can live long, happy lives with the right care.

Here's what to do next...

Step 2: Watch for Warning Signs

- Open mouth breathing when exercising
- Faster or labored breathing at rest
- Decreased energy, altered appetite/weight
- Collapsing episodes or weakness.
- Cold or Painful Forelimbs or Hindlimbs

Step 3: Know the Key Stages for Medication

Stage B1 → Left atrium normal , monitoring only.

Stage B2 → Left Atrium enlarged, preventative meds for clots start here.

Stages C/D → Signs of heart failure,

Step 5: Build a Team with Your Vet

- Keep a log of symptoms and respiratory rates.
- Bring your chart to every appointment.
- Ask about echocardiograms to determine the stage.
- Consider a Home Monitoring/Tracking Device

Step 1: Stay Calm, Gather Info

- Write down any symptoms you've noticed.
- Ask your vet: **'What grade of murmur does my cat have?. Is it intermittent? Is there a gallop or arrhythmia?'**
- Ask your vet: **'Should I get a pro-BNP blood test?'**
- Get an echo – especially if the pro-BNP level is high. This is usually the best test by far in cats
- Ask your vet: **'What stage is my cat? '** (ACVIM B1, B2, C, or D). Stage B1 and B2 need an echo to diagnose
- Chest x-rays are usually unhelpful at assessing heart size, but very useful if there are breathing difficulties

Step 4: Monitoring at Home

Track Breathing (Sleeping Respiratory Rate)

Count your cat's breaths while sleeping.

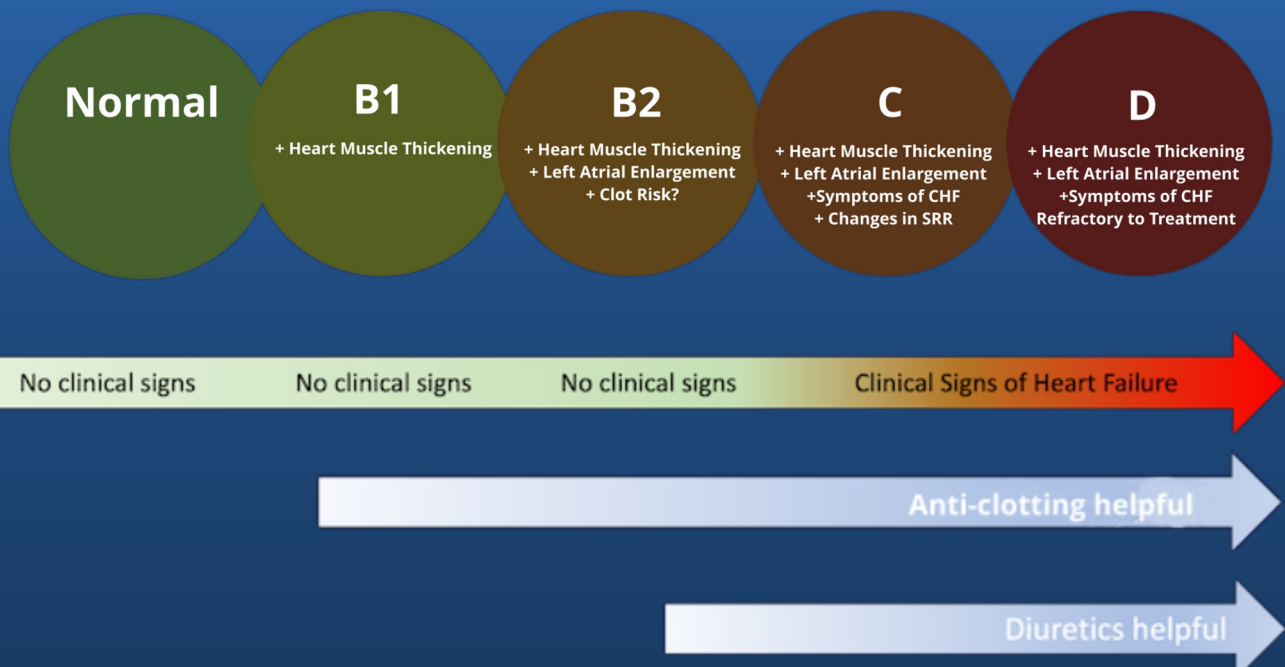
- Watch the chest rise and fall, count for 30 seconds, then multiply by 2.
- Normal = less than 30 breaths per minute.
- Log daily — use the chart provided

Or use the Cardalis App on a smartphone.

Also monitor appetite, exercise, energy and exercise

A fitness tracker can be very useful to quantify this and keep track of sleeping respiratory rates and heart rates

The ACVIM Stages Are A Roadmap To Use As The Condition Progresses



ACVIM Stage	Definition	Usual Treatment Strategy	Monitoring
Stage B1	Left ventricular wall changes No left atrial changes	No treatment Omega 3 fatty acid? Coenzyme Q10?	Monitor symptoms Recheck with vet Check with repeat echo's
Stage B2	Left ventricular wall changes and left atrial enlargement	Start anti-clotting medications (eg clopidogrel, rivaroxaban, aspirin)	Start monitoring SRR and other symptoms
Stage C	Signs of heart failure	Furosemide, anti-clotting, ACE inhibitors??	SRR graphing Regular checks Echo's as needed
Stage D	Advanced heart failure	Specialist care, multiple meds, torsemide	Intensive monitoring

Use this guide to understand what monitoring and medications are typically recommended for each stage. Always confirm with your veterinarian.

✓ Breathing log

✓ Vet questions

✓ Stage awareness

You're not alone — with careful monitoring and the right treatment, many cats with murmurs live comfortably for years.

📺 Watch the full [Cat Heart Health Essentials](#) playlist on YouTube for more in-depth videos.

🔗 Visit www.VetCardioHub.com for all resources

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