

# Is Presence of Heart Murmur a Concern

**M**ay or may not be. A murmur is an unusual sound heard when a doctor examines your heart with the stethoscope. It is often described as swishing sound that occurs between the heart beats. In simple terms, a murmur is produced when increased amount of blood passes through a normal valve or normal/increased amount of blood flow through an abnormal valve.

The murmur means something MAY BE WRONG. however, it doesn't necessarily mean that the problem is serious. They can be benign or harmless or may be concerning.

**HOW ARE THE MURMERS PRODUCED** Inside the heart, blood flows from the upper chambers called atria to the lower chamber called ventricles through mitral valve on the left side and Tricuspid valve on the right side. Then, blood from the right ventricle flows through the PULMONIC VALVE into the PULMONARY ARTERY and then to the lungs.

From the left ventricle, blood passes through the AORTIC VALVE into the aorta and then to the Coronary arteries supplying the heart muscle then to the rest of the body. When the pressure between two of these structures is different, then the blood will rush from the area of higher pressure to the area of lower pressure.

This rapid flow produces turbulence and rushing sound, called Murmur and can be heard through a stethoscope.

**CAUSES OF HEART MURMUR** Murmurs can be heard in most of the newborns which resolve by itself with time. However, some newborns may have abnormal connection between the two upper chambers. ( ATRIAL SEPTAL DEFECTS) or between two lower chambers (VENTRICULAR SEPTAL DEFECTS). These sometimes spontaneously close with time, while other times they need surgery to close these.

Murmurs are fairly common during pregnancy because of the increased blood flow through the valves. These tend to be harmless and most of them resolve on their own after delivery. Anemia or low blood count can also cause heart murmur, and this usually disappears when anemia is corrected. With this, there is no structural abnormalities in the valves.

Overactive thyroid called hyperthyroidism can also cause heart murmur because of the increased blood flow through the valves ( Hyperdynamic Circulation ).

Many times, Murmurs are caused by structural heart abnormalities . This can be caused by a narrow valves.( Stenosis ) or a leaky Valve ( Regurgitation ) or abnormal connection between a coronary artery and the heart chamber ( Fistula ).

**EVALUATION OF HEART MURMERS** A heart murmur is usually detected when a physician listens to the heart with a stethoscope. Some murmurs are so loud that one can hear the murmur with the stethoscope just above the skin Murmurs are graded from 1 to 6, depending on the intensity and duration of the Murmur.

Grade one and grade 2 murmurs are usually benign while higher grades of murmur may need to be investigated. Echocardiogram will detect whether your heart murmur is normal or abnormal. USUALLY if you have a significant murmur related to structural heart disease, you don't necessarily need surgery or other interventions, unless you have significant symptoms.

Your cardiologist will follow these with periodic physical examination and serial echocardiograms, and then determine the need for any procedures.

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