Heart valve disease is the third most common cause of heart problems in the United States. The heart circulates blood through the lungs, where it is oxygenated and then pumped out to the rest of the body. Heart valves maintain the forward flow of blood across the heart and through the circulatory system. Heart valve disease occurs when one or more of the valves malfunction, potentially leading to heart failure if left untreated. These malfunctions can be categorized as stenosis or regurgitation.

Because of gender-specific characteristics, such as pregnancy, women with heart valve disease deserve special attention.

Heart valve disease is the third most common cause of heart disease.
Heart Valve Disease & Women

5 MILLION+ Americans are diagnosed with heart valve disease each year.

Heart valves maintain the forward flow of blood across the heart and through the circulatory system.

**COMMON SIGNS & SYMPTOMS:**
- Heart murmur (physician diagnosed)
- Chest pain or palpitations
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Lightheadedness/loss of consciousness
- Older age
- Previous heart disease diagnosis
- History of infective endocarditis, rheumatic fever, heart attack or heart failure
- High blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, smoking, lack of exercise and other risk factors for plaque buildup

**RISK FACTORS:**

**HEART VALVE REPAIR TREATMENT OPTIONS:**
- Sometimes heart valves can be repaired without needing to entirely replace the valve. This is usually the treatment of choice for a leaking mitral valve.
- A balloon valvuloplasty is a minimally invasive procedure whereby the valve opening is expanded by an inflated balloon inserted through a vein in the leg.

**TYPES:**

**STENOSIS** occurs when a valve opening is narrowed, preventing full circulation of blood and causing the heart to work harder.

Patients with severe aortic stenosis have a 50% mortality rate if left untreated.

**REGURGITATION** occurs when a valve does not close completely, allowing backward flow of blood.

As women age they are at an increased risk for developing heart valve disease.

Heart valve disease is a particular challenge for childbearing women, especially if the mother has an artificial or abnormal heart valve.

**HEART VALVE REPLACEMENT TREATMENT OPTIONS:**
- When a valve cannot be repaired, valve replacement is the solution. Most commonly, a valve made of tissue from a pig, cow, human or from man-made materials is inserted during an open heart operation.
- Several newer minimally invasive heart valve replacement procedures are now available. Transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) is the most commonly performed and has shown good early outcomes in women.

Many factors must be considered to determine the best heart valve treatment for you, so discuss the pros and cons of the various options with your doctor.

**WAYS TO LIVE WELL WITH HEART VALVE DISEASE:**
- Medication adherence
- Healthy diet
- Exercise
- Stop smoking
- Blood pressure management
- Open discussion with your doctor

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