

- Heart diseases

The aging heart: Understanding aortic stenosis and its symptoms

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DID you know that one in eight people over the age of 75 have moderate or severe heart valve disease?



Our bodies change as we get older, and our health becomes more important than ever.

One condition that older adults in Australia should be aware of is aortic stenosis, a heart valve disease that affects millions of people worldwide.

First, let's talk about the heart. The heart has four chambers and four valves that regulate blood flow.

Including the aortic valve that controls blood flow from the heart to the rest of the body.

However, in some cases, the aortic valve can become narrowed or blocked, due to the build-up of calcium deposits leading to aortic stenosis.

This disease is more common in older persons, with an estimated prevalence of the severe disease in 24,000 Australians over the age of 65 living in Victoria.

Symptoms of aortic stenosis can be mild at first, but they can progress over time as the valve becomes narrower.

Some people may not notice any symptoms for many years, while others may experience shortness of breath, chest pain,

dizziness, fatigue and a rapid or irregular heartbeat.

However, aortic stenosis is often underdiagnosed, as some

may mistake their symptoms for the natural effects of aging or other underlying health conditions.

"Aortic stenosis is a heart disease that older adults in Australia should be aware of," interventional cardiologist from the Royal Melbourne Hospital, Dr Matt Brooks said.

"Although some people may not experience symptoms, patients will develop them as the severity of the disease worsens.

"Patients in this age group should undergo heart auscultation to screen for the presence of aortic stenosis and other valvular heart disease."

If left untreated, aortic stenosis can lead to severe health complications such as heart failure, stroke, and even sudden cardiac arrest.

Stay informed, pay attention to your heart, and speak with your doctor if you suspect you have any of the symptoms.

"Aortic stenosis can be a serious disease, the sooner the disease is identified, the sooner people can get the medical treatment they require and improve their quality of life," Dr Brooks said.

Maintaining knowledge of potential symptoms and paying attention to your heart is essential.

Do not let aortic stenosis slow your life; if you notice any symptoms, consult your doctor right away and ask them to listen to your heart.

For more information on heart valve disease or to get a free informational kit visit Newheartvalve.com.au.