



## What Is Cardiomyopathy?

Cardiomyopathy (KAR-de-o-mi-OP-ah-thee) refers to a group of diseases of the heart muscle. These diseases have various causes, signs and symptoms, and treatments.

In cardiomyopathy, the heart muscle becomes enlarged, thick, or rigid. In rare cases, the muscle tissue in the heart is replaced with scar tissue.

As cardiomyopathy worsens, the heart becomes weaker. It's less able to pump blood through the body and may not have a normal electrical rhythm. This can lead to [heart failure](#) and irregular heartbeats called [arrhythmias](#) (ah-RITH-i-ahs). In turn, heart failure can cause fluid to build up in the lungs, ankles, feet, legs, or abdomen.

The weakening of the heart also can cause other complications, such as [heart valve problems](#).

### Overview

The main types of cardiomyopathy are:

- Dilated cardiomyopathy
- Hypertrophic (hi-per-TROF-ik) cardiomyopathy
- Restrictive cardiomyopathy
- Arrhythmogenic (ah-rith-mo-JEN-ik) right ventricular dysplasia (dis-PLA-ze-ah)

Other types of cardiomyopathy sometimes are referred to as "unclassified cardiomyopathy."

Cardiomyopathy can be acquired or inherited. "Acquired" means you aren't born with the disease, but you develop it due to another disease, condition, or factor. "Inherited" means your parents passed the gene for the disease on to you. Many times, the cause of cardiomyopathy isn't known.


Cardiomyopathy can affect people of all ages. However, people in certain age groups are more likely to have certain types of cardiomyopathy. This article focuses on cardiomyopathy in adults.

## Outlook

Some people who have cardiomyopathy have no signs or symptoms and need no treatment. For other people, the disease develops quickly, symptoms are severe, and serious complications occur.


Treatments for cardiomyopathy include lifestyle changes, medicines, surgery, implanted devices to correct arrhythmias, and a nonsurgical procedure. These treatments can control symptoms, reduce complications, and stop the disease from getting worse.

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