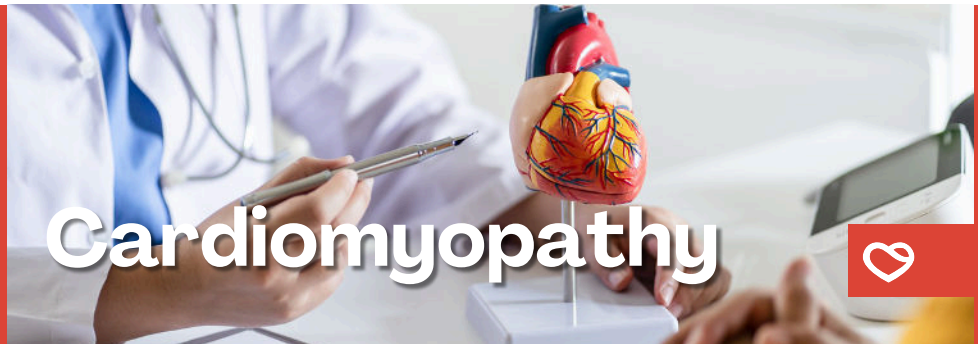
Heart Health Fact Sheet



Cardiomyopathy

Cardiomyopathy is a condition where your heart muscle becomes thickened, stretched or weakened. When the heart muscle changes like this it can have trouble pumping blood around your body.

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR HEART AND BODY DURING CARDIOMYOPATHY?

One of the possible long-term outcomes for women with cardiomyopathy is heart failure.

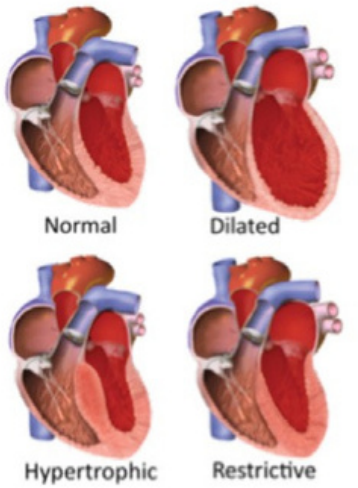
THE TYPES OF CARDIOMYOPATHY ARE:

- **Restrictive:** This is a condition where your ventricles do not thicken, yet they still become stiff and rigid and cannot pump blood effectively.
- **Dilated:** It occurs when your main pumping chamber, the left ventricle, becomes enlarged and weakened so it cannot pum
- p blood effectively.
- **Hypertrophic:** Also known as “HCM”, is a condition where the heart muscle becomes abnormally thick. The thickening can make it harder for the heart to pump blood around the body and can also disturb the heart’s electrical system, leading to irregular heart rhythms (arrhythmias).
- **Arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy:** “ARVC”. In this condition, the right ventricle of your heart has the muscle replaced with a different type of tissue that is more fibrous and fatty. This is problematic, as it can lead to dangerous arrhythmias
- (abnormal heart rhythms).

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

It does depend on which stage of cardiomyopathy you have, as early stages of cardiomyopathy can sometimes present without symptoms. If you have progressing cardiomyopathy these are some of the symptoms you may experience:

- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Swelling in the feet and lower legs, also known as oedema
- Dizziness
- Palpitations
- Chest pain
- Abdominal bloating and swelling



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WHAT ARE THE CAUSES?

There are a number of potential different causes for cardiomyopathy:

- Illicit substances such as amphetamines
- Genetics, as some types of cardiomyopathies may be genetically inherited
- Pregnancy
- Other health conditions such as cardiac sarcoidosis (lumps of cells and inflammation in the heart) and haemochromatosis (too much iron in the heart)
- Over-consumption of alcohol
- Infections
- Prolonged hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Prolonged fast heart rate
- Heart attacks, which can damage the heart muscle

WHAT ARE THE STATISTICS?

- It is estimated that around 1 in 500 Australians have cardiomyopathy, however, numbers are considered not representative as early-stages of cardiomyopathy may not present with any symptoms at all.
- Cardiomyopathy and heart failure are the second-leading heart disease for hospital admissions in Australia.

WHAT ARE THE TREATMENTS?

There are many different treatment options available for cardiomyopathy, it depends on your severity of cardiomyopathy. It would be best to discuss these treatment options with your doctor.

- **Medication treatment:** There are different medications which may be required for treating cardiomyopathy to help manage your symptoms and maintain your heart function.
- **Lifestyle modifications:** Lifestyle modifications which can manage cardiomyopathy include:
  - Eat a healthy, heart-friendly diet
  - Avoid alcohol
  - Don't smoke
  - Exercise regularly
- **Procedures:** You may need surgery on your heart if you have cardiomyopathy, which can include:
  - Defibrillator Insertion: This may be necessary if your heart has the chance of going into an abnormal rhythm. The defibrillator will shock your heart to reset the rhythm.
  - Pacemaker: It regulates your heart rhythm if it is beating at a rate that is either too fast, slow or irregular.
  - Ablation: This works to thin out the level of tissue on your ventricle that is reducing blood flow.
  - Heart transplant: If your heart does not respond to treatment, you may need a transplant.

RESOURCES

- Cardiomyopathy Australia New Zealand
- Genetic Heart Disease Registry of Australia

Her Heart

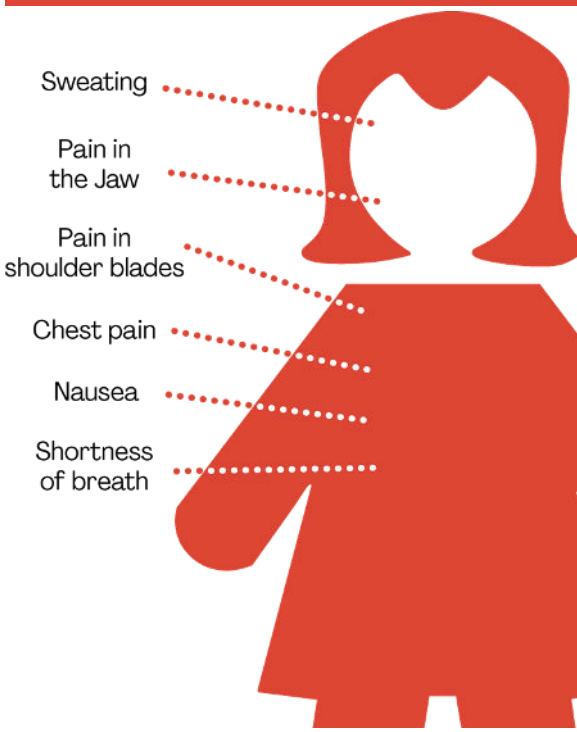
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HEART ATTACK SIGNS IN WOMEN

Warning signs differ between men and women. Women's symptoms include chest discomfort which radiates up to the throat, jaw and through to the back and shoulder blades, extreme fatigue, shortness of breath, heart fluttering, light-headedness and nausea.



HER HEART RESOURCES

HEART HEALTH CHECKLIST

REAL STORIES

SIGN UP FOR UPDATES