

Aortic Balloon Valvuloplasty



When you learn your pet has a heart problem, it can feel overwhelming. One of the most serious conditions we see is aortic stenosis – a narrowing of the aortic valve, which controls blood flow from the heart to the rest of the body.

This narrowing forces the heart to pump harder, which can lead to fainting spells, exercise intolerance, abnormal heart rhythms, or even sudden collapse. Left untreated, it places ongoing strain on your pet’s heart and shortens life expectancy.

Aortic balloon valvuloplasty gives us a way to help. By gently stretching open the narrowed valve with a specialized balloon, we can reduce the obstruction, improve blood flow, and relieve stress on the heart muscle. While not always a complete cure, this minimally invasive procedure often leads to more stamina and a better quality of life for your pet.



What To Expect Your Visit

Your journey with us begins with a complete cardiac evaluation, including echocardiography and other tests to confirm the severity of the stenosis. This step ensures we recommend only what is truly necessary for your pet.

On the day of the procedure, your pet is placed under general anesthesia for safety and comfort. Using a catheter inserted through a vein or artery (usually in the neck or groin), our cardiology team carefully guides a balloon to the narrowed aortic valve. The balloon is then inflated for a few seconds to stretch the valve open and improve blood flow.

Because this is a catheter-based procedure, no open-chest surgery is required. Most pets recover quickly and are able to go home the next day. ¹

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How It Helps Your Pet

The goal of aortic balloon valvuloplasty is to make the heart's job easier. By reducing the narrowing of the valve, we can:

- Improve blood flow from the heart to the body
- Reduce dangerous pressure inside the heart
- Lower the risk of fainting, collapse, or exercise intolerance
- Support a more active life

Even when the narrowing cannot be fully corrected, partial improvement often brings meaningful changes in comfort and quality of life.

Risks and Considerations

Every pet is unique, and the risks of this procedure depend on your pet's overall health, the severity of the stenosis, and their individual anatomy. While most pets tolerate the procedure well, complications can include bleeding, irregular heart rhythms, or incomplete improvement of the valve opening. In some cases, additional treatment may be necessary.

Before the procedure, your cardiologist will review your pet's individual situation, explain what to expect, and answer every question so you feel confident moving forward.

Will I Still Need To See My Veterinarian?

Follow-up is an essential part of your pet's heart health journey. Recheck exams with echocardiography and ECG help us track progress, monitor for recurrence of narrowing, and guide ongoing treatment if needed. Some pets may also benefit from long-term medications to support heart rhythm or blood pressure.

With proper care, many pets experience improved stamina, comfort, and quality of life after balloon valvuloplasty. **2**