



British Heart
Foundation

Left ventricular aneurysm

What is a left ventricular aneurysm?

A left ventricular aneurysm is a swelling of a weakened area in the muscular wall of the left ventricle, the main pumping chamber of the heart.

A left ventricular aneurysm is thought to occur in around 10 to 15% of people who have a heart attack.

What causes it?

It sometimes happens several days or weeks after a heart attack. A heart attack occurs when one of the coronary arteries supplying the heart muscle with blood and oxygen becomes blocked, causing part of the heart muscle to die. The affected part area of heart muscle may become weakened, and result in an aneurysm. This is more likely to happen if the damage caused by the heart attack affects the full thickness of the muscle – known as a transmural heart attack.

What are the symptoms?

The most common symptoms are extreme tiredness and breathlessness. You may experience swelling in your ankles, legs or abdomen, and may develop an abnormal heart rhythm (arrhythmia) or be aware of frequent palpitations.

These symptoms may come on suddenly following a heart attack, or may develop slowly over weeks or even months. All of these symptoms can be associated with other conditions too so it is important that you tell your GP if you experience any new or worsening symptoms.

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FOR EVERY
HEARTBEAT**

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Heart Helpline

Our cardiac nurses and information support officers are here to answer your questions and give you all the heart health information and support you need.

Call us on 0300 330 3311

Similar cost to 01 or 02 numbers.
Lines are open 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday.

This information does not replace the advice that your doctor or nurse may give you. If you are worried about your heart health in any way, contact your GP or local healthcare provider.

What tests will I need?

Your GP will listen to your heart with a stethoscope for any unusual sounds, known as heart murmurs. You will need an ECG (electrocardiogram) to check the electrical activity of your heart, and may need a chest X-ray as well as an echocardiogram. An echocardiogram is an ultrasound scan of your heart, and will allow your doctor to look at the structure of your heart and identify any aneurysms.

Will I need treatment?

Most people have mild symptoms, which are easily controlled. If you do need treatment, this may include taking medicines to reduce the workload of your heart and control the build-up of fluid in your ankles, legs and abdomen. You may also be given an anticoagulant (such as warfarin) to reduce your risk of dangerous blood clots developing.

Your doctor may suggest that you have a surgical procedure to repair the aneurysm, but this will depend on your symptoms and your general health.