# WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CARDIAC AMYLOIDOSIS



## What Is Cardiac Amyloidosis?

Amyloidosis is a group of rare diseases. These diseases occur when the body produces a protein called amyloid that is deposited in the body. Deposits can concentrate in the heart, nerves, kidneys, gastrointestinal tract, or other places. In some patients, amyloid affects mostly 1 organ, but in other patients, it affects several organs. Amyloid deposits can interfere with how an organ works, and symptoms depend on which organs are involved. When amyloid deposits in the heart, it can cause weakness, tiredness, shortness of breath, swelling of the ankles and legs, and other symptoms of heart failure. Some types of amyloid occur in families, but others do not. Symptoms from amyloid may begin at any time during a person's life but are more common in older people.

## What Are the Risk Factors?

Amyloid occurs with some types of blood cancer or when there is chronic inflammation from infection or autoimmune disease. Some patients have gene mutations. However, many patients with amyloidosis do not have any of these problems.

## Who Should Be Screened?

People in the general population do not need to be screened for cardiac amyloidosis. However, the possibility of cardiac amyloidosis should be investigated in patients with certain types of heart failure and some other heart problems, especially when these patients do not have other explanations for their conditions.

## How Is It Diagnosed?

Different types of information are important, and no single type of information is sufficient. A diagnosis of cardiac amyloidosis requires information about your own medical history, the medical

histories of your close relatives, a physical examination, blood tests, and images of your heart. Sometimes a biopsy is required, and gene testing may be useful.

## How Is It Treated?

The goals of treatment are to control the symptoms of heart failure, prevent the complications of abnormal heart rhythms, and slow amyloid deposition. Medications are available to help achieve these goals. However, the medications that control symptoms and prevent complications need to be used differently in patients with cardiac amyloidosis than in patients with other causes of heart failure. Also, specific medications are available to slow amyloid deposition, but different types of medications are used for different types of cardiac amyloidosis.

## Questions for My Doctor

- Does my treatment have side effects?
- How long will it take for me to feel better?
- What additional treatments are available?
- How often should I return for monitoring of my condition?
- What symptoms require emergency care?
- Are there any activities I should avoid?
- How long will I have to take my medications?

## For More Information

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**MedlinePlus**
https://medlineplus.gov/amyloidosis.html

**Mayo Clinic**
www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/amyloidosis

**Johns Hopkins Medicine**
www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/amyloidosis

**Cleveland Clinic**
https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/23398-amyloidosis

Patient Information