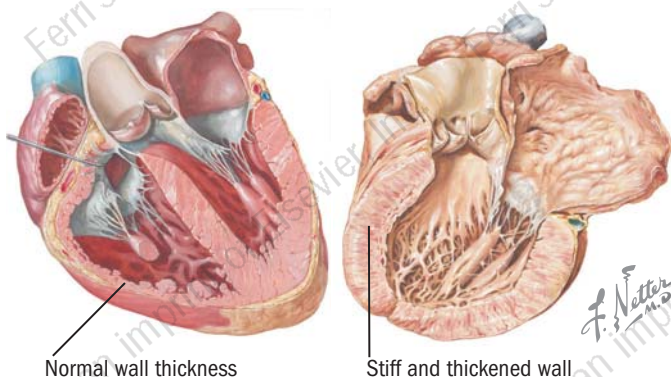
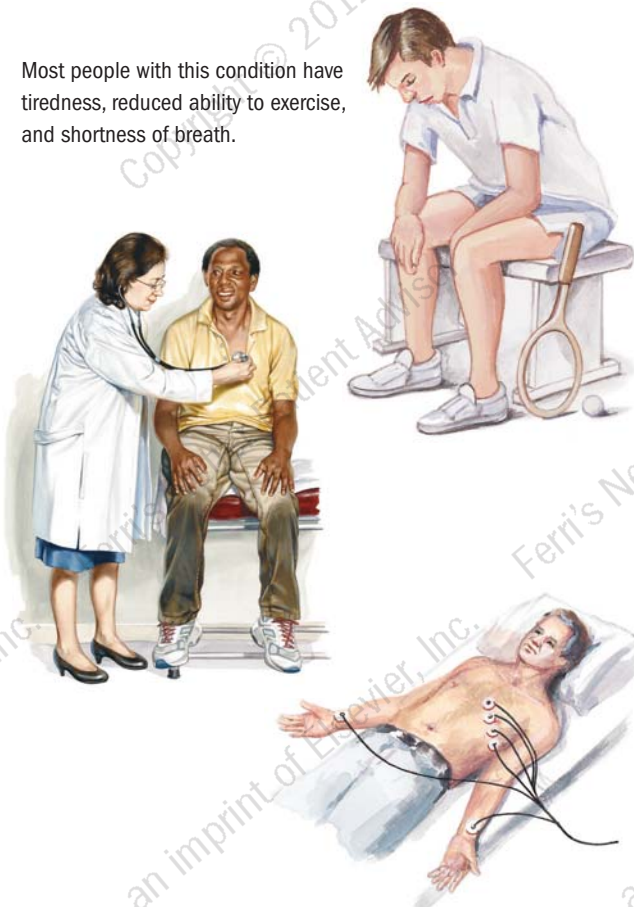


MANAGING YOUR RESTRICTIVE CARDIOMYOPATHY



Restrictive cardiomyopathy is a heart muscle disease. Restrictive cardiomyopathy means that the heart is restricted in its ability to contract because the heart's inner lining becomes stiff. The heart can't expand correctly. The heart muscle thickens but is unable to function normally.

Most people with this condition have tiredness, reduced ability to exercise, and shortness of breath.



Your doctor will take a medical history and do physical examination for diagnosis. Your doctor may also order an ECG (shown here), chest x-rays, and echocardiography (ultrasound of the heart).

What Is Restrictive Cardiomyopathy?

Restrictive cardiomyopathy is a disease of heart muscle that prevents the muscle from contracting (squeezing) with normal force. The result is that the heart doesn't pump blood well. Restrictive cardiomyopathy means that the heart has a restricted ability to contract because the inner lining of the heart becomes stiff. The heart does not expand properly when it fills. The heart muscle thickens to make more muscle so it can increase its strength of contraction, but due to the abnormal filling of the heart is unable to function normally.

This type of heart disease is much less common than heart disease from coronary artery disease or heart valve problems.

What Causes Restrictive Cardiomyopathy?

Most of the time the cause is unknown. Amyloidosis, a condition in which abnormal deposits of protein in some body tissues occur, may be a cause. Sarcoidosis, a condition involving abnormal inflammation of lymph nodes and other tissues, may be another cause. It may also be caused by inflammatory or autoimmune conditions. Drinking alcohol in excess can make it worse.

What Are the Symptoms of Restrictive Cardiomyopathy?

Most people have tiredness, less ability to exercise, and shortness of breath. Swelling in the legs or feet, chest pain, or palpitations (feeling that the heart is skipping or beating too fast) may also occur. Cardiomyopathy can cause heart failure.

How Is Restrictive Cardiomyopathy Diagnosed?

The doctor may suspect the disorder on the basis of the medical history and physical examination. The doctor may also order electrocardiography (ECG) and chest x-rays. These tests usually show an enlarged heart. ECG may also show an irregular heart-beat (arrhythmia). Echocardiography (ultrasound examination of the heart) may be done to check the heart's pumping action. Blood tests may also be done to look for other causes.

In some cases, cardiac catheterization and biopsy of heart tissue may be done to confirm the diagnosis.



Medicines are given to regulate the heartbeat.



Avoid drinking alcohol.

Call your doctor if you have new or worsening chest pain, shortness of breath, swelling in the legs, or fainting.



How Is Restrictive Cardiomyopathy Treated?

Therapy is aimed at relieving symptoms of heart failure and correcting abnormal heart rhythms (arrhythmias).

Medications known as diuretics reduce fluid in the blood to decrease the work of the heart.

The doctor may prescribe drugs that regulate the heartbeat or drugs that suppress immune function (corticosteroids) to fight conditions causing the cardiomyopathy.

If the heart's pumping is very poor and symptoms of heart failure worsen, heart transplantation may be needed.

DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Restrictive Cardiomyopathy:

- ✓ **DO** eat a low-salt diet to reduce fluid accumulation.
- ✓ **DO** take all your prescribed medicines as directed.
- ✓ **DO** exercise when your doctor says that you can.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you have new or worsening chest pain, shortness of breath, swelling in the legs, or fainting.
- ⊗ **DON'T** drink alcohol.

FROM THE DESK OF

NOTES

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following sources:

- American Heart Association
Tel: (800) 242-8721
Website: <http://www.americanheart.org>
- American College of Cardiology
Tel: (800) 253-4636
Website: <http://www.acc.org>