

HYPERTROPHIC CARDIOMYOPATHY

VETERINARY SPECIALISTS OF NORTH TEXAS

WHAT IS HYPERTROPHIC CARDIOMYOPATHY?

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM) is a heart condition characterized by a thickening of the muscle comprising the left ventricle of the heart. This decreases the size of the left ventricular chamber and means the heart has to pump more times per minute to pump a normal volume of blood through the body. This problem develops most commonly in cats and they can develop severe and life-threatening breathing problems. The edema develops from blood backing up into the lungs causing fluid leakage out of the blood vessels.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY PET HAS HCM?

Most commonly, HCM is found on a routine physical exam when a heart murmur is noted. Cats may also have breathing difficulty, lethargy, and may even develop paralysis.

HOW IS HCM DIAGNOSED?

In addition to a physical exam and lab tests, HCM can be diagnosed with radiographs of the chest and an echocardiogram (heart ultrasound) which determines the size and shape of the heart chambers.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR HCM?

Cats that are not sick, may need medication to slow down the progression of the disease. Cats with congestive heart failure are treated with a combination of medications and oxygen to decrease the congestion and to help the heart pump more effectively. The long-term prognosis is variable but with rapid and early intervention, cats with HCM are leading longer lives.

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