



BICUSPID AORTIC FOUNDATION

“Creating a Climate of Hope”

What is Bicuspid Aortic Valve Disease (BAVD)?

Current clinical and scientific studies are revealing that bicuspid aortic valve disease is not a simple valve condition. It increasingly appears to be a genetically based connective tissue disorder estimated to be present in up to 2% of the population. An inclusive definition, listing the major areas of the body possibly affected, is needed. Not everything is understood today, but enough is known to identify several major characteristics of this condition.

BAVD includes the following:

- Bicuspid aortic valve
- Thoracic aortic dilation, aneurysm, or dissection
- Labile hypertension (high blood pressure which changes quickly with stress or exercise)

It may also include:

- Mitral valve leakage
- Coarctation of the aorta
- Kidney or liver cysts
- Near-sighted vision
- Musculoskeletal degenerative changes (scoliosis, degenerative spinal discs, flexible joints, flat feet, etc.)
- Aneurysm of smaller arteries, including head vessels (berry aneurysms)

Not everyone has all of the listed characteristics. However, those diagnosed with a bicuspid aortic valve, who may have wondered why they also have high blood pressure, a leaking mitral valve, or poor eye sight, will recognize themselves in the definition above.

In many people, BAVD is not just an abnormally shaped aortic valve that may some day, when they are older, need to be repaired or replaced. A broader description is needed to include those who:

- require aortic valve treatment in infancy, childhood, or as young adults.
- develop an aortic aneurysm.
- develop an aortic aneurysm after their bicuspid aortic valves have been replaced.
- experience dissection of their ascending aorta.
- have mitral valve failure.

For more information please visit our website at www.bicuspidfoundation.com

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