

Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy is one of the most common cardiac diseases of cats. The average age at diagnosis is 6-7 years old with ranges from 1-16 years old. Males are more predisposed than females and Maine Coon cats are genetically predisposed. Genetic factors, hyperthyroidism, and hypertension can cause the thickening of the left ventricle, which reduces its size and can lead to fluid in the lungs.

Cats can be diagnosed with auscultation of a murmur or gallop rhythm on physical examination. X-rays of the heart and echocardiograms can help with diagnosis. Affected cats can develop difficulty breathing and lethargy following heart failure and fluid in the lungs. Aortic thromboembolism (blood clot in the aorta) can cause acute hind end paresis.

Medications can help improve cardiac function and decrease symptoms.

Asymptomatic cats without marked heart muscle changes may live for years. Seventy percent of symptomatic cats presented in heart failure die within one year of diagnosis. Sudden death may also occur.

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy is a rare disease in dogs. Many dogs are asymptomatic. If they are symptomatic, signs include exercise intolerance, cough, fluid in the lungs, fainting, or sudden death. They are diagnosed and treated similarly to cats.