



# HCMA Fact Sheets

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## What are the Symptoms of Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy?

There is no particular symptom or complaint that is unique to Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy. Symptoms may occur at any stage in a person's life even though the condition may have been present for some time. The reason for the onset of symptoms is often not clear.

- ♥ **Shortness of Breath** – Exercise capacity may be limited by breathlessness and fatigue. Most individuals experience only mild exercise limitations, but occasionally limitation is severe and a minority may have shortness of breath at rest.
- ♥ **Chest Pain** – This is a common symptom which is usually brought on by exertion and relieved by rest, but pain may occur at rest or during sleep and may persist. The cause of the pain is thought to be insufficient oxygen supply to the myocardium. In Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy the main coronary arteries are usually normal, but the greatly thickened muscle demands an increased oxygen supply which cannot be met in some circumstances.
- ♥ **Palpitation** – Palpitation is an uncomfortable awareness of the heartbeat. People may occasionally feel an extra beat or a skipped beat and this is usually normal. Sometimes an awareness of the heart beating does suggest an irregular heart rhythm. In this case, palpitation may start suddenly, appear to be very fast and may be associated with sweating or light-headedness. The cause of such episodes should be determined and treated.
- ♥ **Light-Headedness and Blackouts** – Persons with the condition may experience light-headedness, dizziness and more seriously, blackouts. Episodes may occur in association with exercise, with palpitations or without any apparent provocation. The reasons for these episodes are not always clear. They may be due to an irregularity of the heartbeat, or fall in blood pressure. Episodes of light-headedness, and certainly a blackout, should be reported to one's doctor and investigated.

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