Your pet has a **heart murmur**

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WHAT IS A HEART MURMUR?



A **'whooshing'** sound that your vet hears with a stethoscope alongside the 'lub-dub' of the normal heartbeat.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR MY PET?

A murmur is NOT a diagnosis!
It indicates that there has been a **change** to the **normal** blood flow, that is heard by your vet.

Although certain characteristics of murmurs can be linked to some specific diseases, we **cannot be sure** of the cause **without looking** at the heart structures directly, to know if treatment is required.

HOW LOUD IS IT?



Murmur intensity **does not correlate** with the stage of disease. Some **soft** murmurs can be a concern, some **loud** murmurs can be only minor change.

CAUSES OF A HEART MURMUR



CONGENITAL DEFECTS

Abnormalities in the heart that your pet was born with. Generally noticed in puppies and kittens.

E.g. patent ductus arteriosus (PDA), ventricular septal defect (VSD) or valve abnormalities

> NARROWED < BLOOD VESSELS

Blood is pushed through a smaller space, at an increased pressure.

E.g. congenital stenosis (aorta or pulmonary artery), outflow tract obstruction (cats), lesions (tumours, blood clots or bacterial damage)

VALVE DISEASE

Generally occuring later in life, causing the valves to leak. Typically progressive (worse with time).

E.g. degenerative mitral valve disease (DMVD) / myxomatous mitral valve disease (MMVD)

< S T R E T C H E D > VALVES

Conditions of the heart muscle causing dilation of the heart, leading to valves leaking

E.g. dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM), arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy (ARVC), tachycardia induced myocardial failure (TIMF)

NORMAL HEARTS!

Turbulent, but normal blood flow.

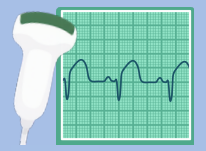
E.g. Physiologic ('flow') murmur

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Your vet may recommend an **echocardiogram** - an ultrasound scan of the heart. This is to **find the cause** of the murmur and look to see if there are any. **secondary changes** (such as heart . enlargement or changes in function), to decide if treatment is indicated.

MY PET HAS NO SYMPTOMS, DO THEY NEED A SCAN?

In many cases, treatment **before** clinical signs develop can significantly **slow disease down**, **increase lifespan** and even **save lives** - some conditions can be fixed before it's too late!
It is better to make the **correct diagnosis** to determine the best longterm plan, or even prevent giving **unnecessary medication**.



WHAT DOES A CARDIOLOGIST DO?

Perform a **detailed** heart assessment, using their expertise to **identify** or **rule out** cardiac disease, uncover other **contributing conditions** and **work alongside your vet** to provide the best possible care for your pet

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What do you need to know?