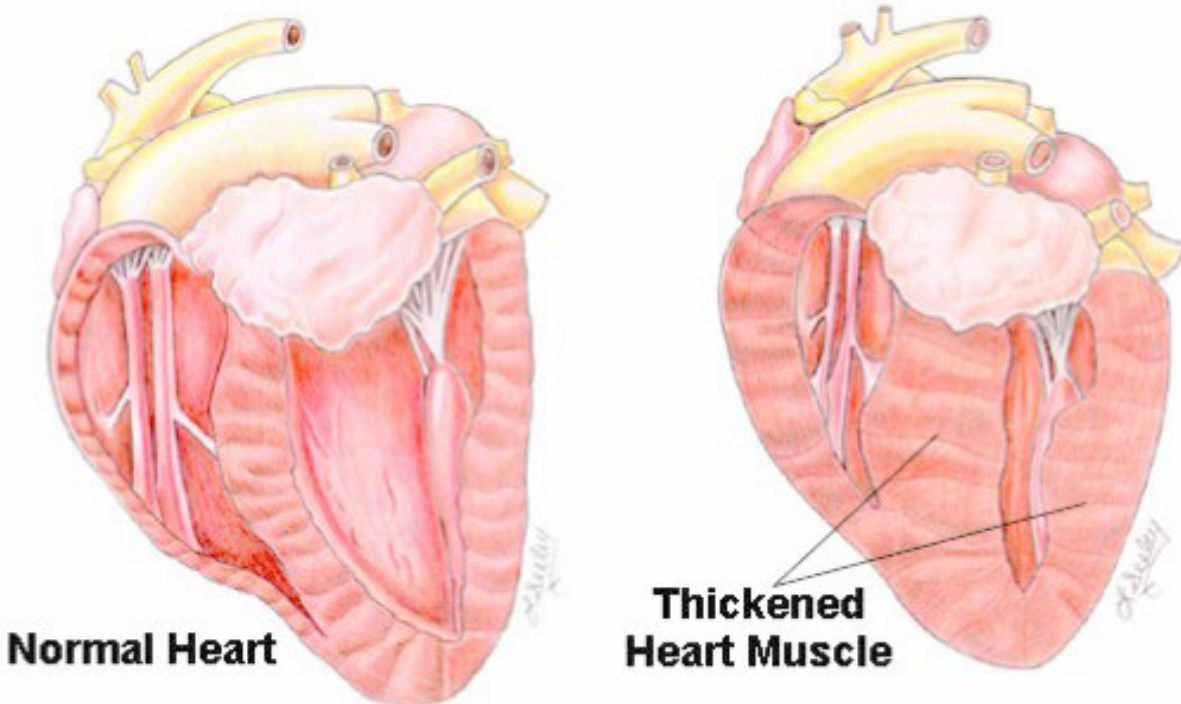


Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy



Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM) is a disease that causes the left ventricular walls to become thick, and the left atrium to enlarge. As this disease progresses the heart becomes stiffer and does not relax and fill appropriately. As pressure within the heart increases, it is transmitted back into the lungs. If this increased pressure becomes severe enough, fluid accumulates within the lungs causing congestive heart failure. The dilated left atrium is also a risk for clots which can circulate to the rear legs causing pain and paralysis. HCM is believed to have a hereditary component in several breeds of cat.

Long term prognosis is hard to predict. In one study, cats that were asymptomatic at diagnosis had an average survival time of greater than 5 years. Possible complications include development of congestive heart failure, formation of an aortic thromboembolism, and sudden death.