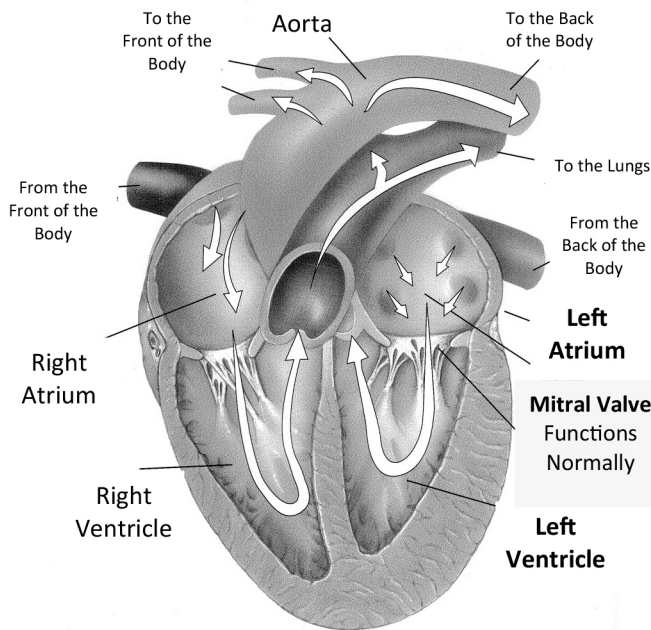
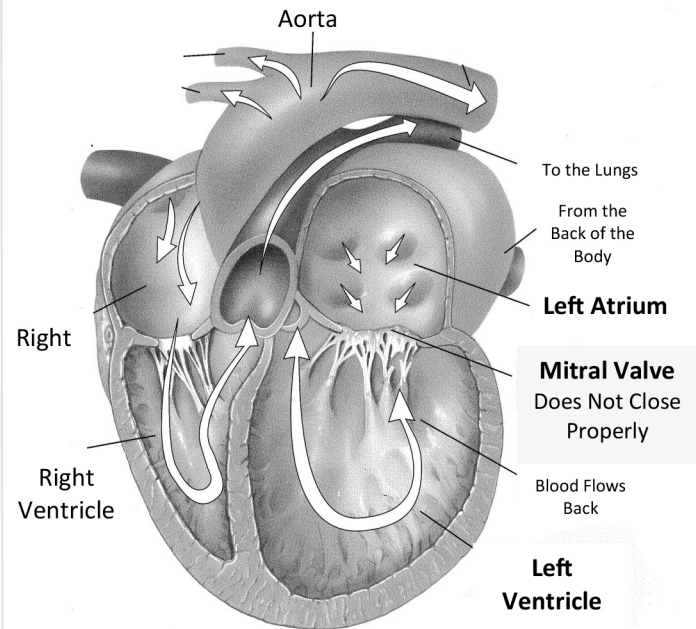


Mitral Valve Regurgitation

Healthy Heart



Chronic Valvular Disease



Each chamber of the heart has a one-way valve to keep blood from flowing backward. The valve between the left atrium and left ventricle is called the mitral valve. Commonly in older dogs the edges of the valve leaflets thicken, become knobby, and do not close completely. This process is called Endocardiosis. This results in blood leaking backwards from the ventricle into the atrium every time the heart contracts. This leak is referred to as mitral valve regurgitation. Its cause is unknown.

These changes result in enlargement of the left atrium secondary to chronic regurgitation. Prognosis is quite variable with some dogs worsening rapidly, and others remaining compensated for the rest of their lives. The main risk of Mitral Regurgitation is congestive heart failure, which often causes congestion and fluid in the lungs. The result is respiratory symptoms such as increased respiratory rate, coughing, and labored breathing. Mitral Regurgitation cannot be cured, and it is progressive, but it can usually be reasonably controlled with medication. Regular re-examinations and good home monitoring are the keys to success in managing Mitral Regurgitation.