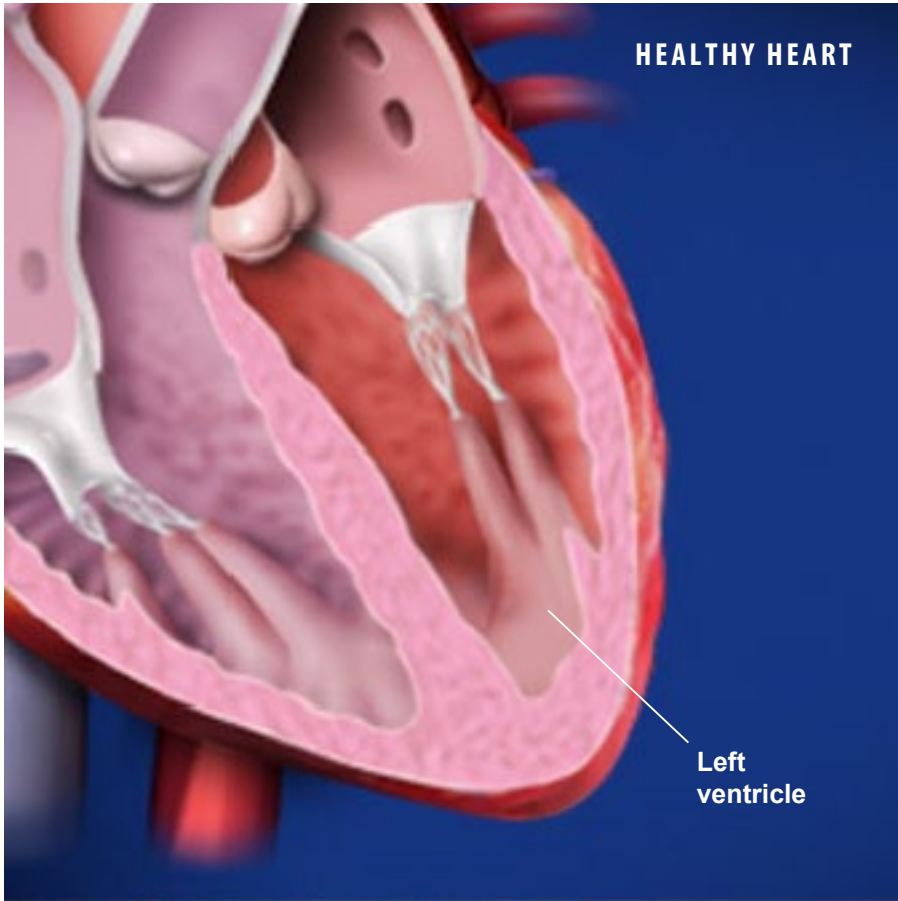




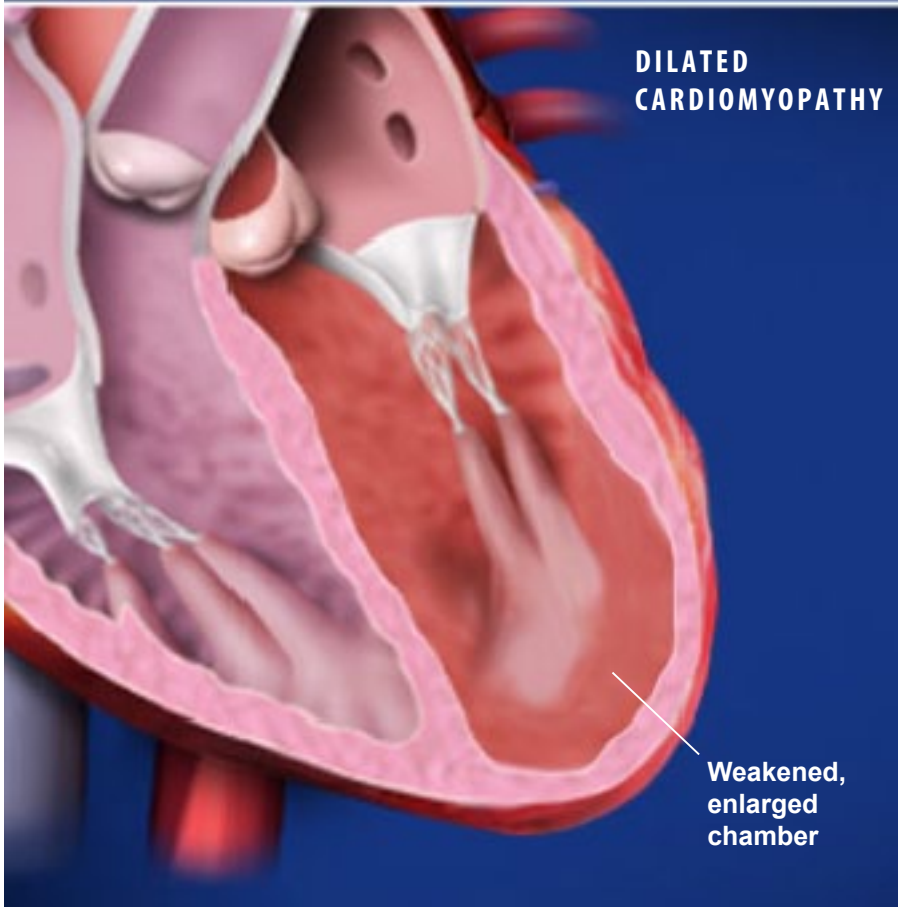
## Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM)

### HEALTHY HEART



Left  
ventricle

### DILATED CARDIOMYOPATHY



Weakened,  
enlarged  
chamber

#### Overview

This disease is caused by a weakening of the heart muscle. It primarily affects the left ventricle, the heart's main pumping chamber. In a heart with dilated cardiomyopathy, the diseased muscle fibers have stretched and the chamber has enlarged to make up for its lost pumping power. A heart affected by dilated cardiomyopathy has difficulty supplying enough blood flow to meet the body's needs. This can result in heart failure.

#### Causes

In most cases, no cause can be identified for dilated cardiomyopathy. However, some causes include infection, diabetes, thyroid disease or obesity. It can also result from the use of alcohol, illicit drugs or certain medications.

#### Symptoms

Symptoms may include shortness of breath, fatigue and a rapid heart rate. Symptoms may also include lightheadedness, dizziness or fainting spells, especially during physical exertion.

#### Symptoms (Continued)

A person with dilated cardiomyopathy may experience a persistent cough and wheezing, fluid in the lungs, and swelling in the abdomen, legs and feet.

#### Blood Clots

Dilated cardiomyopathy can also result in the formation of blood clots in the heart. These clots can break away and clog vessels throughout the body, damaging organs and tissues. A clot that reaches the brain can cause a stroke.

#### Treatment

Treatment options for dilated cardiomyopathy may include lifestyle modifications, medications, and the surgical implantation of a pacemaker. In severe cases, a heart transplant may be needed.