

# Robinson Veterinary Services

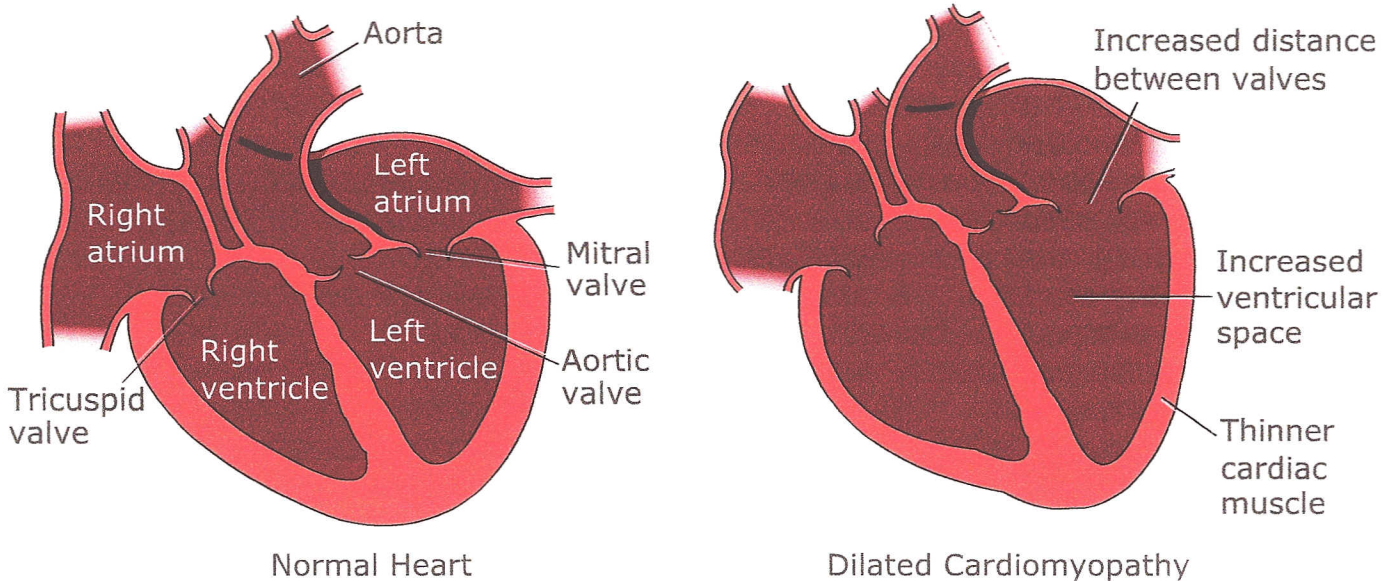
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Cardiomyopathy - Dilated : Comparison of a normal heart and one with dilated cardiomyopathy.



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Dilated cardiomyopathy is a form of heart disease where the heart muscle is weak and is unable to contract properly. Over time, the weakness progresses so that the heart is not able to efficiently pump blood to the body. The weakened muscle stretches, or dilates, causing the chambers of the heart to enlarge. As the heart stretches, the valve openings also stretch, so that they are not able to close properly. During a stethoscopic examination of the heart, an audible heart murmur indicates the presence of leaky valves. The disease is diagnosed by means of an ultrasound examination of the heart. Dilated cardiomyopathy is usually an inherited disorder and is very common in certain breeds of dogs. In cats, it may be caused by a nutritional deficiency, but is very rare with today's high quality pet nutritional products. Further information can be found in our Client Education Handout Series.