

# Health Awareness



## Is It Heart Failure Or ATTR-CM? Six Ways To Know The Difference

(NAPS)—Doctors estimate more than a million Americans are at risk for a condition known as Transthyretin Amyloid Cardiomyopathy or ATTR-CM. If you or someone you care for is at risk, there are a few facts you should know.

One problem is it's often misdiagnosed as heart failure and therefore not treated properly or promptly enough. The American Heart Association volunteer experts, Dr. Amrut Ambardekar, M.D., Associate Professor at Colorado University, Denver and Dr. Michelle Kittleson, M.D., Ph.D., Director, Heart Failure Research, Post-Graduate Education in Heart Failure and Transplantation Associate Professor of Medicine Smidt Heart Institute Cedars-Sinai, answer a few important questions patients should know:

**1. What is ATTR-CM?** The potentially fatal condition happens when protein deposits in the walls of the left heart ventricle, the main pumping chamber of the heart. This makes the heart walls stiff, so they can no longer pump blood properly.

There are two types of ATTR-CM: hereditary and wild. Hereditary ATTR-CM can run in families and involves a mutated gene that results in deposits in the heart, nerves and sometimes the kidneys or other organs. Hereditary ATTR-CM can run in families. Symptoms may start as early as age 20 or as late as 80.

The wild-type ATTR-CM doesn't run in families and most commonly affects the heart, though it can also cause carpal tunnel syndrome and pain and numbness in the hands and feet. Symptoms usually start after age 65.

### **2. What are the risk factors?**

Hereditary ATTR-CM risks include:

- Having a family member with ATTR-CM or heart failure
- Being 50+
- Being male
- Being African American

Wild-Type ATTR-CM risks include:

- Being age 65+
- Being male

### **3. What are the symptoms?**

- Shortness of breath is the most com-



**Doctors are taking a careful look at heart failure patients to see if they actually have Transthyretin Amyloid Cardiomyopathy.**

mon symptom, especially with physical activity and when lying down

- Coughing or wheezing, especially when lying down
- Swollen feet, ankles and legs
- Bloated abdomen
- Confusion
- Increased heart rate
- Palpitations or abnormal heart rhythms
- Numbness or tingling in hands and feet
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

### **4. How is ATTR-CM diagnosed?**

The diagnosis may be suspected because of typical symptoms and the results of a routine cardiac tests to record the rhythm of the heart. More specialized tests can confirm the diagnosis. These could include:

- Heart imaging or a cardiac MRI
- Genetic testing

**5. How is ATTR-CM treated?** Doctors focus on easing the heart failure symptoms and slowing or stopping the protein deposits. In cases of advanced heart failure, a heart transplant may be an option. Sometimes, both heart and liver transplants are required.

Medications were recently approved to treat the neuropathy caused by the hereditary type.

Clinical trials on certain medications continue and give great hope for future breakthroughs and treatment options.

**6. How can you learn more?** For further facts, health care providers, people at-risk, and anyone interested in good health can visit and download resources at [Heart.org/ATTRCM](https://www.heart.org/ATTRCM).