



Understanding Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR)

Patient-Friendly Guide & Timeline

Purpose: Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement, or TAVR, is a minimally invasive procedure used to treat severe narrowing of the aortic valve (called aortic stenosis).

Why TAVR Is Recommended

TAVR may be recommended if you have severe aortic valve narrowing that is causing symptoms such as shortness of breath, chest pain, fatigue, dizziness, or fainting. These symptoms happen because the heart must work much harder to push blood through a tight valve. Without treatment, severe aortic stenosis can lead to episodes of angina, heart failure or death.

TAVR allows doctors to place a new valve using thin tubes (catheters) without opening the chest. This can be safer and easier to recover from than traditional open-heart surgery for many patients.

Why Testing and Visits Are Needed Before TAVR

Before TAVR, a careful evaluation is required to make sure the procedure is safe and that the valve is the right size and type for you. Each test looks at a different part of your heart and blood vessels to lower risk and improve outcomes.

Typical TAVR Evaluation Timeline

Timing may vary based on your health needs and scheduling availability.

Visit or Test	Approximate Timing	Reason for the Visit
Heart Ultrasound (Echocardiogram)	First visit or within 3–6 months	Confirms severe aortic valve narrowing and measures heart function.
Structural Heart Clinic Visit	1–2 weeks after echo	Reviews symptoms, test results, and determines if TAVR is appropriate.
CT Angiogram (Chest/Abdomen/Pelvis)	Within 1–2 weeks	Measures valve size and checks blood vessels to safely guide valve placement.
Heart Catheterization	Within 1–3 weeks	Checks for blocked heart arteries and measures heart pressures.
Heart Surgeon Consultation	Same day or within 1 week	Confirms that TAVR is the best treatment option compared with surgery.
Pre-Procedure Testing	1–2 weeks before procedure	Blood work and health checks to prepare for anesthesia and recovery.
TAVR Procedure	After testing is complete	Placement of the new aortic valve through a catheter.
1-Week Follow-Up Visit	About 7 days after discharge	Checks healing, symptoms, and medications.
30-Day Heart Ultrasound	About 1 month after TAVR	Confirms the new valve is working well.
30-Day Clinic Visit	Same week as ultrasound	Reviews recovery and long-term care plan.
6-Month Follow-Up	6 months after TAVR	Monitors heart function and symptoms.
1-Year Follow-Up	12 months after TAVR	Long-term heart and valve check.

**Medicare (CMS) covers TAVR for patients with symptomatic severe aortic stenosis when the procedure follows FDA-approved indications and is performed by a specialized multidisciplinary heart team in an experienced hospital program. A complete pre- and post-procedure evaluation is required to ensure safety and benefit.*