



## Arrhythmia



### Overview

If your heart beats too fast, too slow, or irregularly, you have an arrhythmia. It's a problem with the rhythm of your heart. For many people, an arrhythmia is harmless. But for some, it can be life-threatening.

### Causes

We don't always know what causes an arrhythmia. You can be born with one, especially if you have a heart defect that interferes with the heart's electrical system (the system that controls the beat of your heart). Arrhythmia also develops if the heart's electrical system is damaged. This may happen if you have a heart attack, high blood pressure, or some other condition that hurts your heart. Some arrhythmias are linked to things like smoking, alcohol, drugs and medication use. And stress hormones - like the ones released when you are upset or angry - can also cause an arrhythmia.

### Symptoms

Symptoms may include a feeling that your heart is fluttering or skipping beats. Your heart may beat too slow or too fast. You may feel anxious and sweaty. You may have shortness of breath. You may feel weak, dizzy and lightheaded. You may have chest pain. And you may faint.

### Treatment

Treatment options depend on the reason for your arrhythmia and the severity of your symptoms. Your healthcare provider can create a plan that's right for you.