

A Doctor's Guide to Healthy Heart Rhythm

our heart is a muscular organ, about the size of your own clenched fist. Every second of every day, your heart pumps blood throughout your body. This circulating blood delivers necessary oxygen and nutrients to your body's organs and tissues, and drops off waste products to be filtered out by your lungs, kidneys, and liver.

Your heart has three main components, which all work together:

- Your heart structure the muscle's chambers and valves
- Your circulatory system or blood pathways
- Your heart's electrical system signals that tell your heart to beat

that carry blood rich in oxygen from the left side of the heart to smaller vessels, called

capillaries, where nutrients and waste products are exchanged between blood cells and tissues. Veins return "used" blood from your capillaries to the right side of

your heart, which routes it to the lungs to pick up fresh oxygen. The fresh

blood then returns to the left side of your heart, and the cycle repeats.

What keeps your heart pumping, however, is its built-in electrical system, called the cardiac conduction system. This system consists of three parts.

First, an electrical impulse generator, the sinoatrial or SA node, is often called your heart's natural pacemaker. This node sends signals

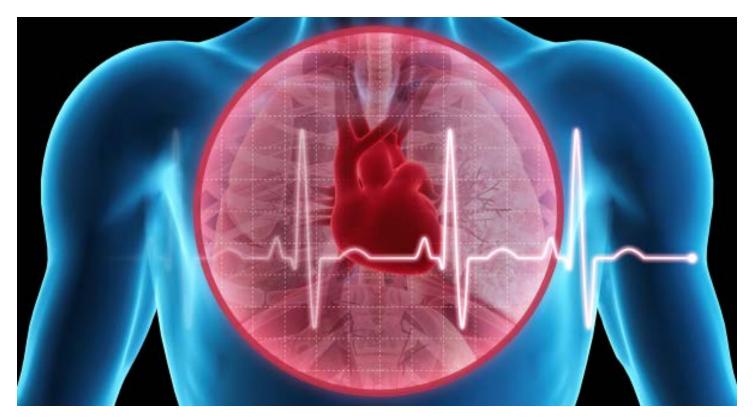
A Quick Review of Your Heart Components

Your heart muscle is divided into four chambers — the left and right atria or upper chambers, and the left and right ventricles or lower chambers. With each heartbeat, the atria draw blood into the heart and pass it into the ventricles, which push the blood out of the heart. Valves located between the chambers and at the ends of the ventricles open and close like little doorways to make sure your blood continues to move in the right direction.

Your circulatory system contains arteries, vessels

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from your right atrium to initiate your heartbeat, and keep it firing in a consistent rhythm.

Second, you also have an AV or atrioventricular node in the center of your heart, which picks up the electrical signals from the SA node and passes them along to the lower part of your heart.

And third, a bundle of fibers called the His-Purkinje system carries the electrical signals through the ventricles or lower chambers of your heart, causing them to contract and pump blood to the rest of your body.

Your SA node generally sends out about 60 to 80 electrical signals per minute, which determines your heart rate. When the three parts of the conduction system work in a coordinated fashion, you have what is termed a normal sinus rhythm.

When Things Go Wrong

Your sinus rhythm will speed up when you exercise or exert yourself and slow down when you are asleep or sedentary. However, as long as your heart rhythm remains even and steady, it is normal. Unfortunately, a problem in a node or anywhere along the electrical path can disrupt the regular beating of the heart and cause an arrhythmia, or irregular heartbeat.

Arrhythmias can occur with a normal heart rate, or with heart rates that are too slow or too rapid. Arrhythmias are potentially dangerous because they can disrupt blood supply (and vital oxygen) to body tissues that rely on that blood for nourishment. While a cardiac arrhythmia may occur at any age, the condition is most common in those over age

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Symptoms of Arrhythmias

Some arrhythmias may be "silent" and not cause any symptoms whatsoever.

When symptoms of an arrhythmia do occur, they may include:

- Palpitations a feeling like your heart is skipping beats, fluttering or doing "flip-flops"
- Pounding in your chest
- Dizziness or feeling light-headed
- Fainting, blacking out, or near-fainting
- Shortness of breath
- Chest discomfort
- Feeling very tired, weak, or fatigued
- Unexplained anxiety

Types of Arrhythmias

Generally speaking, arrhythmias are labeled by the area of the heart where they occur. For example, atrial arrhythmias occur in the upper chambers of the heart and ventricular arrhythmias originate in the lower chambers or ventricles. Some arrhythmias are characterized by whether the heart beats too quickly (termed "tachycardia") or too slowly (termed "bradycardia"). And of course, some arrhythmias are more dangerous and serious than others.

Two arrhythmias which originate in your heart's upper chambers or atria include:

Atrial Fibrillation (AFib) — Over 2 million Americans suffer from atrial fibrillation, making it a very common arrhythmia. In AFib, the top heart chambers (atria) quiver in a very rapid, irregular pattern. The heartbeat is irregular and rapid, sometimes beating faster than 200 or 300 times a minute (a normal resting heart rate is typically between 60 to 100 beats a minute). Although it isn't necessarily life-threatening, AFib can lead to other heart problems, congestive heart failure, or stroke. Those with AFib are five times more likely to suffer a stroke than those with a normal heartbeat.

Atrial Flutter (AFL) — Atrial flutter is similar to AFib, characterized by a rapid heartbeat. Instead of rapid disorganized signals in the atria, however, AFL is caused by a single electrical wave that circulates very rapidly in the atrium (usually the right atrium), about 250 to 350 times a minute,



leading to a very fast, steady heartbeat.

Treatment of atrial arrhythmias varies. In mild cases, you may be able to simply avoid whatever is causing them, such as alcohol, caffeine, or nicotine. In more serious cases, your doctor may prescribe an antiarrhythmic medication to help control your heart rate. You may also be prescribed a blood thinning drug to reduce your risk of blood clots and stroke.

The following two arrhythmias originate in the heart's lower chambers, or ventricles:

Ventricular Tachycardia (VT) —

Characterized by a very fast heart rate of 150 to 250 beats per minute, VT usually is seen with other serious heart disease, and may be considered life-

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Chauncey W. Crandall, M.D., F.A.C.C., is chief of the cardiac transplant program at the world-renowned Palm Beach Cardiovascular Clinic in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., where he practices interventional, vascular, and transplant cardiology. Dr. Crandall received his post-graduate training at Yale University School of

Medicine, where he also completed three years of research in the cardiovascular surgery division. He lectures nationally and internationally on preventive cardiology, cardiological healthcare of the elderly, healing, interventional cardiology, and heart transplants. Known as the "Christian physician," Dr. Crandall has been heralded for his values and message of hope to all his heart patients.



Do You Treat Your Car Better Than You Treat Your Heart?

Your heart works hard to keep you going . . .

168 hours a week, 8736 hours a year, year after year, under all types of conditions. It gets no vacation — ever — as long as you live.

Did you realize that every day, your heart needs to produce the amount of energy equal to driving a truck 20 miles? During an average lifetime, that's enough energy generated to drive you to the moon — and back.

So as you can imagine, your heart has huge demands for nutrition and energy. It needs "high-octane" fuel — and regular maintenance — to propel blood through your 60,000 miles of blood vessels.

Yet, if you're like many people, you hardly give your heart a second thought. Until something related to your heart goes

haywire, that is . . .

Like blood pressure concerns, high cholesterol, or other heart issues . . .

The point is, many people treat their car better than they do their own heart . . .

By the time you hit your 40s, 50s, or 60s — even if you feel great — you should be very concerned about what's going on inside your heart. Especially after decades of a less-than-optimal diet, too little exercise, too much stress, a few extra pounds, or other bad habits. That's why your doctor probably "bugs" you about your cholesterol numbers every time you go in for a checkup. And why, according to cardiologist Chauncey Crandall, M.D., it's high time to stop taking chances with your heart health.



Chauncey Crandall, M.D.

"I personally formulated Cardio Advanced™ to include the optimal amount of plant sterols and other nutrients necessary to promote a healthy heart."

A New Breakthrough in Heart Support . . .

Dr. Crandall recently developed **Cardio Advanced™**. This all-natural dietary supplement contains 12 special ingredients chosen to help improve and maintain your normal cholesterol levels and heart health. The "flagship" of this exclusive formula — plant sterols — may actually help lower your risk for heart disease when taken as part of a

diet low in cholesterol and fat. Although you've likely never heard of them, research indicates that plant sterols work by blocking the absorption of cholesterol in your intestines. And you'll find a full research amount — 2 grams — in your daily dose of **Cardio AdvancedTM**, along with 11 more hand-picked ingredients to support your heart, like CoQ10, hawthorn, and essential B vitamins.

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Yes — for a limited time, you can get a FREE 30-day supply of Cardio Advanced™ (a \$49.95 value). Plus, if you act now, you will also receive a Special Report from Dr. Crandall, A Doctor's Guide to a Healthy Heart (a \$20 value). You just cover a low shipping and processing fee of \$4.95. That's a total value of nearly \$70 — yours right now for only \$4.95.

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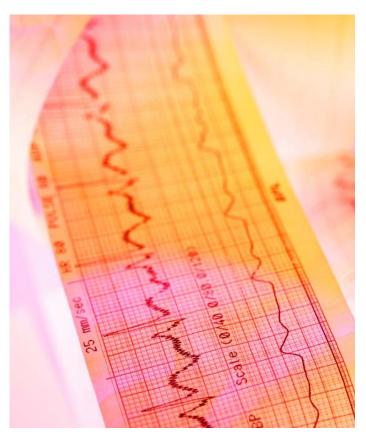
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threatening. Occasionally, it occurs in people with otherwise normal hearts. If it does not stop on its own, VT usually requires prompt treatment with either medication or an electrical jolt to the heart (electrical cardioversion). Further treatment of VT may involve antiarrhythmic drugs or a surgical procedure. Sometimes, people with VT and heart disease have a defibrillator implanted. Because VT may lead to ventricular fibrillation (see below), it is considered a serious condition that warrants immediate medical attention.

Ventricular Fibrillation (VF) — Ventricular fibrillation causes the heart to beat in a rapid, chaotic way, sometimes over 300 beats per minute. This means that very little blood circulates to the brain or the rest of the body. This can lead to sudden cardiac arrest. VF poses the greatest threat of all arrhythmias and accounts for about 50% of all cardiac deaths. During VF, the blood pressure drops to zero, and the person falls unconscious. Prompt, life-saving shock (defibrillation) must be delivered to the heart to restore a normal rhythm or death may occur in minutes. Sometimes, VF can happen during a heart attack because the heart muscle is

irritated by the sudden blockage of an artery. VF can also happen at other times, or even due to an inherited (genetic) heart condition. It is important to realize that VF is an electrical disorder of the heart and not the same thing as a heart attack. It may or may not be related to a problem with clogged arteries that supply the heart with blood. VF is sudden and happens without any warning. In some cases where a person is known to suffer from VF, a defibrillator may be implanted in the heart.

Here are some other common heart rhythm conditions:

Bradycardia — A diagnosis of bradycardia means that your heart rate is slower than 60 beats per minute, either occasionally or all the time. This does not allow the heart to supply enough blood and oxygen to the rest of the body. Bradycardia is most common in older people and affects about 600,000 people a year. Fatigue, shortness of breath, and dizziness are common symptoms and may be confused with "normal aging." Often, a pacemaker may be implanted to help the heart beat at a normal rate.

Premature Contractions — Extra, early, or "skipped" beats are the most frequent cause of irregular heart rhythms and may be relatively harmless. Extra beats can come from either the heart's upper chambers (premature atrial complexes, PACs), or lower chambers (premature ventricular complexes, PVCs). These extra beats may be the result of excess consumption of alcohol or caffeine, or electrolyte disturbance.

What Causes an Arrhythmia?

Arrhythmias may be caused by many different factors, including:

- Too vigorous exercise
- Excess stress
- Stimulants such as caffeine and nicotine
- Alcohol consumption
- Certain medications, including cough and cold medicines, decongestants, and asthma inhalers
- Underlying heart disease, including high blood pressure and heart valve disorders
- Chronic lung disease such as asthma or emphysema
- Diabetes or thyroid disease
- Overheating of the body



 Electrolyte imbalance in the blood (particularly sodium or potassium)

- Injury from a heart attack
- Healing process after heart surgery

Irregular heart rhythms can also occur in otherwise normal, healthy hearts.

Heart specialists can use a variety of different tests to look at the heart's structure and circulation, as well as the heart's electrical system, in order to pinpoint the exact cause of arrhythmia symptoms and decide on a treatment plan.

Sometimes, a doctor may detect or suspect an irregular heartbeat during a physical exam by taking your pulse. Other times, specialized tests such as cardiac stress tests, electrocardiogram, Holter monitoring, or others may be used in diagnosis.

What Lifestyle Changes Can Help You Prevent or Minimize Arrhythmias?

To minimize your chances of developing an arrhythmia, try to reduce as many risk factors as you can. While you can't change your family history or your age, you can minimize certain risk factors within your control.

If you notice that your arrhythmia occurs more often with certain activities, you should obviously avoid these activities.

If you smoke, stop now. Smoking is a significant

risk factor for arrhythmia. The stimulants in nicotine can trigger arrhythmias directly. In addition, smoking contributes to as much as one-third of all cardiovascular disease, and causes more heart and blood vessel disease, stroke, and heart-related deaths than all illegal drugs combined.

Limit your intake of alcohol. Alcohol can act as an arrhythmia trigger. Heavy alcohol use is a major risk factor for high blood pressure, cardiomyopathy (weakening of the heart muscle), heart failure, stroke, and arrhythmias. When used in moderation (no more than one drink per day for women or two for men), alcohol may provide some heart benefits. However, even small amounts of alcohol can trigger arrhythmias in some people.

Limit or stop using caffeine. Caffeine is the substance most commonly associated with arrhythmias — particularly with fast heartbeats (tachycardia). Caffeinated beverages (soft drinks, energy drinks, coffee and tea), certain foods (chocolate), and even some caffeinated over-the-counter medications can trigger heart palpitations, or feelings of heart fluttering, pounding, or racing in some people.

Avoid stimulants used in cough, cold, and certain diet drugs. Some such medications contain ingredients that promote irregular heart rhythms.

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The Secret to Digestive Health?

Next time you're at the grocery store, take a few seconds to appreciate the heft of a one-pound package of butter ...

Because some researchers now believe you have an entire organ weighing two or three times that amount in your gut — an organ composed entirely of bacteria!

This structure, which scientists refer to as the "microbial organ," contains about 100 trillion bacteria. Under optimal circumstances, most of these are considered "friendly" or probiotic bacteria, performing functions benefiting your digestive and immune health.

Unfortunately, and particularly with increasing age or even the use of certain drugs such as antibiotics, non-beneficial bacteria may begin to take over — and crowd out the friendly species. This causes an imbalance that can lead to common digestive concerns such as constipation or diarrhea, gas, bloating, and abdominal discomfort.

Finally, Put the Brakes on Bathroom Bothers

Fortunately, renowned holistic doctor David Brownstein, M.D., counsels you don't have to live with backed-up or bothersome bowels — or other uncomfortable digestive concerns.

Dr. Brownstein recommends an all-natural solution to irregular bowel movements and other digestive issues: replenishing your supply of these beneficial gut helpers by

supplementing with proven strains of powerful probiotic bacteria.

This will actually help normalize the transit time of waste material in your colon — so you can have more regular and less uncomfortable bowel movements. And with a balanced digestive system, you experience less embarrassing gas and bloating, too.

Replenish 'Friendly' Bowel Bacteria for Gut & Immune Health

In his Doctor's Guide to Probiotics and Your Health, Dr. Brownstein reveals why yogurt and cheap probiotic supplements are just a waste of your hard-earned money. Plus, you'll see why high-quality probiotics can also be an invaluable asset to your properlyfunctioning immune system. And this Special Report, a \$20 value, is your gift from Dr. Brownstein.

Plus, you'll also get a complimentary 30-day supply of **Bactipro™**, a new breakthrough digestive and immune health probiotic formula Dr. Brownstein personally developed after seeing many of his patients suffering from simple digestive concerns.

Now Try Bactipro™ for a Full Month!

This all-natural dietary supplement contains six powerful strains of beneficial probiotic bacteria, healthful fiber and bacteria-nourishing prebiotics, a robust antioxidant blend, and a powerful phytonutrient complex — all packed into one tasty wafer.

And all chosen specifically to help improve and maintain your normal digestive system and immune function. In fact, **Bactipro™** specifically targets both your small and large intestine simultaneously, with proven Bifidobacteria and Lactobacillus strains.

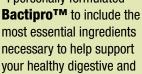
Dr. Brownstein is so confident that **Bactipro™** will help soothe and comfort your digestive system that he's made arrangements to let you try it as part of a SPECIAL OFFER!

Yes — for a limited time, you can get a 30-day supply of Bactipro™ (a \$39.95 value) and Doctor's Guide to Probiotics and Your Health (a \$20 value). With enrollment into our convenient smart ship program, you just cover a low shipping fee of \$4.95. That's a total value of almost \$60 yours for only \$4.95.

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- David Brownstein, M.D.



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Read the label and ask your doctor or pharmacist what medication would be best for you.

Get regular (but not excessive) exercise and follow a heart-healthy diet low in fat and rich in vegetables, fruits, and lean protein such as chicken, fish, and beans. The Mediterranean diet is an appropriate diet for minimizing arrhythmia problems.

Maintain a healthy weight. Obesity is a risk factor for arrhythmia.

Avoid unnecessary stress in your life, and find ways to manage or control the stress that is unavoidable. Enjoying social times with friends or loved ones and taking quiet time in reflection, meditation, or prayer may be helpful to alleviate stress. In addition, just staying active can go a long way toward relieving chronic stress.

Numerous airborne substances can cause arrhythmias and other heart disease, particularly in the workplace. Some potentially dangerous substances include automobile emissions, industrial pollution, paint thinners, and

propane gas.

Get regular medical checkups. See your doctor regularly, and mention any symptoms you are experiencing. Bring medicines you're taking to your doctor visits. This helps ensure that all of your doctors know exactly what medicines you're taking, which

can help avoid medication errors. If you have an arrhythmia, taking care of yourself is important. If you feel dizzy or faint, you should lie down. For safety reasons, don't try to walk or drive to the doctor or ER. Let your doctor know about these symptoms immediately.

Although people who appear healthy and free of heart disease may also experience arrhythmias, those with underlying heart disease are at the highest risk, whether they have symptoms or lead a normal life. So, reducing or preventing heart disease is also key to reducing the risk of arrhythmias. Along those lines, minimize general risk factors for heart disease — control blood pressure, maintain normal cholesterol, and keep conditions such as diabetes and thyroid problems under control.

What Nutrients Are Helpful to Prevent or Minimize Arrhythmias?

Numerous studies have demonstrated that supplementing with magnesium may support overall cardiovascular health. In particular, magnesium also supports proper heart rhythm by helping to stabilize the heart's electrical system. It also plays a role in supporting normal blood pressure levels. Research indicates that arrhythmias are more likely when the blood level of magnesium is low, particularly in those with congestive heart failure. Those whose diet includes a lot of processed foods and soft drinks may also have low magnesium levels.

New research also suggests that optimizing lipid levels is important to reduce the risk of cardiac arrhythmias and related cardiac concerns. So nutrients which support optimal cholesterol levels are also helpful, including niacin or vitamin

B3. Other vitamins which support overall good cardiovascular health include vitamin B6 and folate. Those who don't eat enough vegetables or those who drink or smoke are particularly prone to folate deficiency.

Fish oil containing omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA also helps stabilize the electrical activity of the heart muscle.

Final Thoughts

Your heart must pump blood approximately 100,800 times each day, or about 70 times a minute, every hour of the day, every day of the year. So it is not uncommon to experience some degree of arrhythmia or heartbeat irregularity during one's lifetime. While some arrhythmias are harmless, others may be life-threatening.

Many anti-arrhythmia medications carry the risk of serious side effects, and surgical procedures are inherently hazardous. Thus an effective and conservative course of action is to incorporate the lifestyle and dietary changes noted in this brief guide to minimize or prevent the occurrence of cardiac arrhythmias and other cardiovascular concerns.

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11 Pain-Busting Ingredients

"The joint power twins — glucosamine and chondroitin help increase joint spacing to increase your joint flexibility and comfort."

"I've added bromelain to help promote proper inflammatory response."

"And finally, a potent combination of curcumin, piperine, pomegranate, green tea extract, vitamins A and E, and holy basil that combat nasty free radicals."

Real People. Real Stories. Real Relief.

"Since taking Limbex™, the swelling in my hands has gone down. And I have movement in my fingers again."

Goldie D., Cloquet, MN

"After two weeks, the pain in my knees just disappeared," says

- Irena O. of Washington, DC.

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