

Women, Your Heartbeat is Important!

It's common to say, "My heart just skipped a beat!" when you are suddenly surprised or excited by something and we don't think much of it. In reality, if your heartbeat experiences some kind of change, we call it an arrhythmia. Also known as an irregular or abnormal heartbeat. It may feel like your heart skipped a beat, added a beat, or is "fluttering." It might feel like it's beating too fast or too slow—or you might not notice anything. If you do feel something, or your Fitbit or smart watch shows a slow heart rate or irregular heart rate, you should contact your doctor.

Causes and symptoms

Heart arrhythmia has a wide range of possible causes, including, but not limited to:

- Hormonal fluctuations characteristic of menstruation, pregnancy or menopause
- Medical conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease or thyroid disorder
- Common triggers such as caffeine, stress, medications, cold remedies or air pollution

You may experience one or more of these common seven signs of a heart arrhythmia:

1. Rapid heartbeat (tachycardia)
2. Slow heartbeat (bradycardia)
3. Shortness of breath
4. Profuse sweating
5. Confusion
6. Dizziness
7. Fainting

Arrhythmias in women

There are many different types of arrhythmias, but certain types are more common in women than in men. These include:

- **Supraventricular Tachycardia (SVT) or Paroxysmal SVT (PSVT).** A rapid heart rate that starts in the upper part of the heart.
- **Sinus Node Dysfunction** (also called sick sinus syndrome). A slow or irregular heart rhythm caused by a malfunction of the sinus node, which acts as the heart's pacemaker.
- **AV Nodal Re-entry Tachycardia (AVNRT).** A type of SVT that causes the heart to beat unusually fast.
- **Long QT Syndrome.** A QT interval—a measurement made on an electrocardiogram to assess the heart—is longer than normal. This increases the risk for life-threatening conditions.
- **Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS).** A condition that affects 500,000 Americans, primarily women. Those with POTS have an abnormal response to change in position, causing drop in blood pressure, raise in heart rate and sometimes fainting.

Diagnosis and treatments

To confirm an irregular heartbeat, a cardiologist will conduct a physical examination and perform a number of tests, which

may include an electrocardiogram, echocardiogram, stress test, cardiac catheterization and outpatient monitoring (short and long term).

Depending on the underlying cause, therapies can range from lifestyle changes to medicine to surgical interventions.

Act now! Arrhythmias can sometimes require emergency care. Other times they are just plain uncomfortable. If you feel something unusual happening with your heartbeat, call your doctor. A heart arrhythmia can be diagnosed and treated quickly.

Meet the Providers of Regional Electrophysiology Associates



Dr. Steven P. Kutalek, MD, FACC, FHRS, received his medical degree from New York University School of Medicine. He completed an internship in internal medicine at Medical College of Pennsylvania and then completed a residency in internal medicine at Hahnemann

University Hospital. Dr. Kutalek completed his fellowship in clinical cardiac electrophysiology at William Likoff Cardiovascular Institute of Hahnemann University, where he also served as Senior Fellow and Chief Fellow. He is board certified in internal medicine, cardiovascular disease and cardiac electrophysiology.



Dr. Ashwani Gupta, MD, FACC, FHRS, received his medical degree from All India Institute of Medical Sciences and completed a residency in internal medicine at Drexel University. He completed two fellowships—one in cardiovascular medicine and another

in cardiac electrophysiology—at Drexel University College of Medicine/Hahnemann University Hospital, where he also served as Chief Fellow. Dr. Gupta is board certified in internal medicine, echocardiography, nuclear cardiology, cardiovascular diseases and clinical cardiac electrophysiology. He is fluent in English, Hindi and Punjabi.

Schedule an Appointment

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