

“My Heart Just Skipped A Beat”

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Palpitations

- Sensation of feeling your heart beat in your chest
- Can be normal or abnormal
- More common at night when at rest
- May be more sensitive when lying on left side



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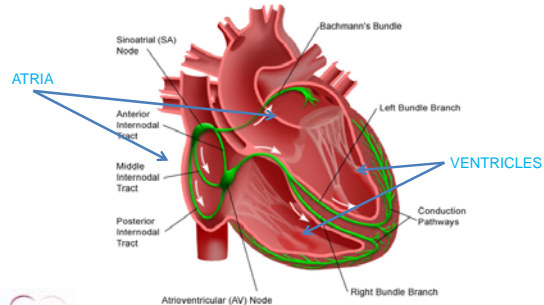
“Skipped beats”

- Most of the time, a sensation of skipped beats is actually an “extra” heart beat
- Premature contraction
 - Atrial (PAC)
 - Ventricular (PVC)



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Electrical System of the Heart



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PAC

- Premature atrial contraction
- Early extra heart beat coming from the top (atria) of your heart



May feel a fluttering or a “pause” like a skipped beat



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PAC

- Usually no consequences from PACs
- Many people have them and don't feel them
- May feel them only at times of rest
- Very rarely they may go on to other heart rhythm problems
- Often no treatment as they are benign



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PVC

- Premature Ventricular Contraction
- More commonly felt than PACs
- Skipped beat, fluttering, sensation in throat, cough, flip-flop in chest, more sensitive when lying on left side
- Can also be a sign of heart disease
 - Should be evaluated



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PVC



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PVC/PAC

- Can be made worse by caffeine and alcohol
- It may help to eat a diet high in electrolytes
 - Check with your physician first before making diet changes
 - Magnesium may help
- Can often have “electrical storms”
 - Periods with lots of symptoms followed by asymptomatic period with no obvious explanation



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Evaluation for “Skipped Beats”

- History and Physical
- 12 lead EKG
- Sometimes
 - Echocardiogram (ultrasound of heart)
 - Stress Test
 - Holter Monitor
 - Event Monitor



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Treatment

- Depends on the cause
- Does the person have known heart disease?
- Options include
 - Nothing
 - Life-style changes
 - Medications
 - Ablation
 - Will vary based on symptoms and co-morbid illnesses



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