

Fast Facts

Atrial Fibrillation

-An irregular and often rapid heart rate

-Heart's electrical system malfunctions causing it to rapidly send signals to the atria (upper chambers of the heart) to contract at an increased rate. The muscles are unable to actually contract due to the speed at which the signals are being transmitted, so they end up quivering instead. The signals get sent to the ventricles (lower chambers of the heart) and they will contract more rapidly than normal, but not as fast as the atria

-Main problem is the atria just quivering is that the blood can pool in them and start to clot. These clots can end up traveling through your bloodstream and reach your brain, lungs or somewhere else causing you to have stroke, pulmonary embolism, or blockage to elsewhere in your body

<i>Causes</i>	<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
Abnormality or damage to heart's structure: -Hypertension -Heart attack -Coronary artery disease -Abnormal heart valves -Congenital heart defects -Overactive thyroid gland -Metabolic imbalance -Sleep apnea -Exposure to stimulants	-Palpitations (racing, uncomfortable or flip-flopping sensation in their chest) -Irregular heartbeat -Weakness -Reduced ability to exercise -Fatigue -Lightheadedness -Dizziness -Confusion -Shortness of breath -Chest pain -No symptoms	Emergent: -Cardioversion -Anti-arrhythmic medications Maintenance: -Heart Rate Control -Blood Thinners -Anti-arrhythmic medications	-Keep blood pressure and cholesterol in control -Healthy diet -Increased physical activity -Maintain a healthy weight -Avoid smoking -Limit/avoid alcohol/caffeine -Reduce stress/anger -Be aware of over-the-counter cough/cold medications

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