



## Arrhythmia

**Cardiac dysrhythmia** (also known as **arrhythmia**) is a term for any of a large and heterogeneous group of conditions in which there is abnormal electrical activity in the heart. The heart beat may be too fast or too slow, and may be regular or irregular.

Some arrhythmias are life-threatening medical emergencies that can result in cardiac arrest and sudden death. Others cause symptoms such as an abnormal awareness of heart beat (palpitations), and may be merely annoying. These palpitations have also been known to be caused by atrial/ventricular fibrillation, wire faults, and other technical or mechanical issues in cardiac pacemakers/defibrillators. Still others may not be associated with any symptoms at all, but may predispose the patient to potentially life threatening stroke or embolism.

Some arrhythmias are very minor and can be regarded as normal variants. In fact, most people will on occasion feel their heart skip a beat, or give an occasional extra strong beat; neither of these is usually a cause for alarm.