

Tips for Managing Heart Palpitations



Things you can do on your own

- Stay calm.
- Take your pulse (the beating in your wrist), or ask someone with you to take it for you. Write down how many times you feel your pulse in one minute.
- Write down how often you feel the palpitations, and how you feel when they happen. Share this information with your care team.
- Tap out the beat of your palpitations. This will help you explain the problem to your care team.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol.
- Avoid nicotine (including smoking, chewing tobacco, and vaping).
- Stay hydrated by drinking 6-8 cups of water daily.
- Try to get 8 hours of sleep a night.
- Try actions to help slow your heart rate. These are called vagal maneuvers.
 - Splash cold water on your face or the back of your neck. You can also apply an icepack to your face for 20-30 seconds.
 - Hold your breath for 15 seconds or bear down like you're having a bowel movement.
 - Try meditation exercises to reduce stress.



With the help of your care team

Ask your care team about beta-blockers to slow your heart rate and lower your blood pressure if you have heart palpitations that do not go away.



When to call your care team for help

- If you have any chest pain
- If your heart rate becomes very fast (more than 120 beats a minute) while you are resting
- If your heart rate feels irregular, or if it feels your heart is skipping beats
- If your palpitations are happening more often
- If your palpitations get worse
- If you have palpitations and feel short of breath
- If you feel like you may pass out



For more information and support, visit the American Cancer Society website at cancer.org/sideeffects or call us at **1-800-227-2345**. We're here when you need us.