



# **A Simple Guide To Palpitations, (Fast Heart Beats) Diagnosis, Treatment And Related Conditions (A Simple Guide to Medical Conditions)**

*Kenneth Kee*

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### Chapter 1

#### Palpitations (fast heart beats)

##### What Are Palpitations?

Palpitations are medical symptoms of feelings that the heart is beating irregularly or pounding too hard or too fast.

These sensations can also be felt in the chest, throat, or neck.

Palpitations can happen during physical activity or when the patient is lying down or sitting still.

Palpitations can happen together with other symptoms like giddiness and chest tightness.

##### What Causes Palpitations?

Many causes of palpitations are present.

Palpitations may happen when the heart beat is normal or somewhat faster than normal.

The palpitations symptoms may appear frightening but most are not harmful and frequently go away on their own.

Harmful palpitations are indicative of a heart problem.

The cause of palpitations is not known so the doctor may need to investigate them.

##### Causes not linked to Heart Problems

###### 1. Emotional causes from a surge of epinephrine in the body

The palpitations may occur from strong emotions such as panic attacks, anxiety, or excitement.

A panic attack may produce an overwhelming sense of anxiety, fear, and apprehension, together with nausea, sweating, trembling and palpitations.

###### 2. Strenuous Physical Activity

Intense physical exercise may cause the heart feel like it is beating too hard or too fast even though it is working normally.

Intense physical exercise also can cause some premature (extra) heartbeats.

### 3. Hormonal Changes

Palpitations can happen from hormonal changes that occur during pregnancy, menstruation, and around the menopausal period.

These palpitations are temporary and tend to improve or go away as these medical conditions go away or change.

The palpitations in women during pregnancy may be due to anemia.

### 4. Medical Conditions

Many medical disorders can induce the heart to beat faster or stronger or irregularly than usual.

Medical disorders may cause premature (extra) heartbeats.

These medical disorders are:

- a. An overactive thyroid
- b. A low blood sugar level
- c. Anemia
- d. Some types of low blood pressure
- e. Fever
- f. Dehydration (insufficient fluid in the body)

### 5. Medicines and Stimulants

Less frequently, medicines can spark off palpitations because they can induce the heart to beat faster or stronger than usual or premature (extra) heartbeats:

- a. Inhaled asthma medicines
- b. Medicines to treat an under active thyroid.

Too much of these medicines can result in an over active thyroid and produce palpitations.

- c. Medicines to prevent arrhythmias

Medicines used to prevent irregular heart rhythms can often induce other irregular heart rhythms.

d. Over-the-counter medicines that work as stimulants also may cause palpitations. These are decongestants (found in cough and cold medicines) and some herbal supplements.

e. Caffeine, nicotine (seen in tobacco), alcohol, and illegal drugs (such as cocaine and amphetamines) also can produce palpitations.

#### Causes Linked to Heart Problems

Arrhythmias or abnormal heart beats are present in less than 50% of the people who have palpitations.

Arrhythmias are heart disorders that affect the rate or rhythm of the heartbeat.

The heart can beat with an irregular rhythm, too fast or too slow during an arrhythmia.

The arrhythmia happens if some part of the heart's electrical system does not work as it should.

Palpitations are likely to be linked to an arrhythmia if a person has:

- a. A heart attack or are at risk for one.
- b. Coronary heart disease (CHD) or risk factors for CHD.
- c. Other heart problems such as heart valve disease, heart failure, or heart muscle disease.
- d. Abnormal electrolyte levels that are minerals such as potassium and sodium, present in blood and body fluids.

These electrolytes are necessary for normal heart health and functioning of the body.

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