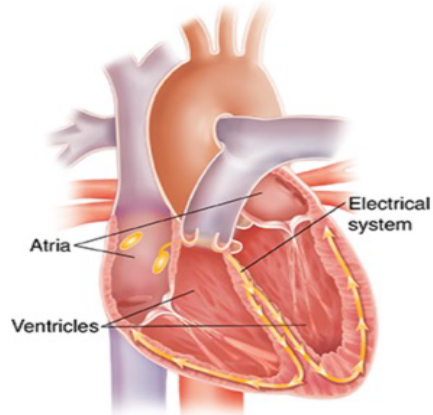


How to Care for Your Child with a Palpitations

This leaflet will provide you with information about palpitations causes, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment and home care advice.



What is Palpitations?

Palpitations mean when children feel their heartbeat. It can be fast, strong or irregular.

What are the symptoms of palpitations?

Your child may experience the following:

- Feeling that his/her heart is racing or beating so hard
- Feeling that his/her heart is skipping beats
- Some children may complain of associated chest pain or discomfort, dizziness or faint
- Some children may experience tight chest or difficulty in breathing

How is palpitations diagnosed?

The doctor will ask few questions about your child's health and examine your child. Your doctor will decide if further investigation or blood tests are required like

- Checking your child's heart rate
- Electrocardiogram (ECG) is a recording of the electric activity of your child's heart

What are the causes of palpitations?

The below could be a cause of palpitations:

- Stress, anxiety especially when your child is frightened
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Asthma and allergy medicines
- Health problems such as anaemia or thyroid gland problems.
- Arrhythmia (Explained below)
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Arrhythmia:

- A fault within the built-in electric system of the heart. The doctor will be able to check for that through the medical history, examination and investigations such as ECG.
- The ECG may need to be done for a longer duration (24-48 hours or longer) to capture the arrhythmia. Sometimes it may be necessary to send your child home with a device that records the electrical activity of the heart. This is called Holter monitoring.
- Arrhythmia is suspected if the child is known to have a cardiac problem or if he/she had heart surgery before. It is also considered if there is a family history of a heartbeat problem or sudden death in young persons in the family. If arrhythmia, the heart doctor may reassure the family, treat with medicines or other special procedure called ablation. This needs to be done for the child after admission. The decision is based mainly on the type of arrhythmia.

How is palpitations treated?

Treating palpitations is through treating their cause:

- Most children with palpitations have no significant health problem as palpitations often happen with stress and anxiety, especially when the child is frightened. So the treatment mostly is reassurance and counselling.
- Ensure that your child is drinking enough fluids.
- Rarely palpitations can be related to a health problem like anemia or thyroid gland problem. The doctor should be able to investigate those problems and manage accordingly.

Home care advice

- Do not stop giving your child their asthma and allergy medicines unless directed by the doctor.
- Keep a log of your child's symptoms and in the situations where the symptoms were experienced. This will help you identify the cause of palpitations and be able to manage them.
- Encourage your child to drink enough fluids every day.

When should I seek medical advice?

Seek medical advice if:

- Your child is known to have a heart problem
- There is a family history of sudden death in a young person
- Your child is unwell
- Your child loses consciousness