

Did You Know?

- Cardiovascular diseases are the number one leading cause of death in the United States
- More than 800,000 people are taken to the hospital every year for heart rhythm disorders
- Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is not the same thing as a heart attack—heart attacks occur when there is a blockage in the blood flow to the heart; SCA occurs when the heart unexpectedly ceases to function.
- The most common cause of SCA is a heart rhythm disorder (arrhythmia) called ventricular fibrillation (VF). VF is an “electrical problem” in the heart. Suddenly, the electrical signals that regulate the pumping action of the lower chambers of the heart (ventricles) become rapid and chaotic. If this happens, blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs. In addition, if the heartbeat is not restored with an electrical shock immediately, death follows within minutes. SCA accounts for more than 350,000 deaths in the U.S. each year.
- Around 95 percent of cardiac arrest victims die before they are able to reach a hospital or receive emergency attention
- For more interesting facts or information about heart rhythm disorders, visit www.hrsonline.org.



Why Should I Be Aware of My Healthcare Provider's Certifications?

Arrhythmia patients require heightened vigilance and extraordinarily intricate care from a team of highly skilled health professionals. As healthcare has become more complex, it has become increasingly vital to assure patients that healthcare professionals are competent. Everyone in the healthcare equation — patients, employers, healthcare professionals — benefits from the advanced knowledge and optimal care delivered by an IBHRE Certified Specialist.

IBHRE Certified Professionals have mastered the critical competencies required of their profession. They provide patients with reassurance that their healthcare provider is experienced, competent, and qualified.



To find out if your healthcare provider is IBHRE certified, check the list of Certified Recipients on our website at www.IBHRE.org



What is IBHRE?

The International Board of Heart Rhythm Examiners (IBHRE™) is the global leader in heart rhythm certification. Established in 1985, IBHRE™ was the first testing organization founded to raise the level of professionalism and academic credibility in cardiac pacing and electrophysiology. IBHRE certified specialists include both physicians and allied professionals who have been tested on the scientific foundation, clinical skills, and technical knowledge required to provide and facilitate safe quality patient care in the management of arrhythmias. Exams administered by IBHRE are recognized in the US and internationally as the highest benchmark of professional competency in heart rhythm management. Learn more at www.IBHRE.org.

**International Board of
Heart Rhythm Examiners**

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IBHRE PATIENT GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING HEART RHYTHM DISORDERS



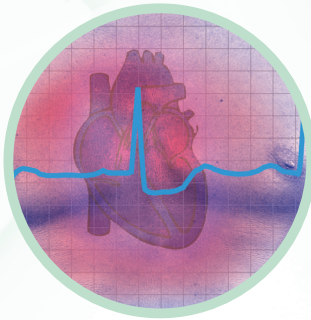
What they are, how to prevent them,
and who is qualified to treat patients

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What is a Heart Rhythm Disorder?

A heart rhythm disorder usually occurs when the heart does not beat regularly. Normally, electrical impulses travel through the heart causing the heart to beat, or contract, at regular intervals. When the heart beats normally, it allows blood and nutrients to be pumped to central organs and throughout the rest of the body without difficulty. When a heart has an irregular beat, this is oftentimes known as arrhythmia, essentially meaning 'rhythm disorder'.



Who is Likely to Have a Heart Rhythm Disorder?

Heart rhythm disorders can affect any individual, although they are more commonly developed in those who have had preliminary heart problems. Some risk factors that may increase an individual's likelihood of developing a heart rhythm disorder include:

- Coronary artery disease
- High blood pressure or cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Smoking
- Stress
- Obesity
- Excessive alcohol use
- Family history of heart disease
- Advancing age
- Certain medications or dietary supplements

What are the Symptoms of a Heart Rhythm Disorder?

Heart rhythm disorders vary in severity and noticeability. Some heart rhythm disorders, such as palpitations, oftentimes go unnoticed or are simply brushed off as a skip in one's heartbeat. Other times, a heartbeat can go either too fast or too slow and can cause fainting or shortness of breath. These disorders, called tachycardias and bradycardias, are more commonly noticed.

It's important to know that some heart rhythm disorders (arrhythmia) come and go, and sometimes the symptoms can be hard to identify. Some arrhythmias are even unrelated to the heart; they can be caused by medications or metabolic diseases. Stress and diet can also trigger abnormal heart rhythms in people who are generally seen as healthy. It is recommended you speak to your doctor if you experience:

- Palpitation or a skipped beat
- Rapid heartbeat (tachycardias)
- Fainting
- Fluttering
- Slow heartbeat (bradycardia)

How do I Minimize Risk?

Avoiding or minimizing the risk factors listed above may decrease your chances of developing a heart rhythm disorder. Maintaining a healthy diet and weight, exercising regularly, reducing unnecessary stress, and getting regular checkups are also recommended. Reducing activities associated with heart rhythm disorder risk, such as smoking or consuming large amounts of caffeine or alcohol, are healthy ways to minimize risk factors in your everyday life.

Who is Qualified to Treat Patients with Heart Rhythm Disorders?

There are many physicians who are able to treat patients for heart rhythm disorders, although some are more qualified than others. These physicians are supported by allied professionals such as nurses, physician assistants, and lab technicians. Physicians and allied professionals who have passed an exam administered by the International Board of Heart Rhythm Examiners (IBHRE) are certified in cardiac rhythm device therapy or cardiac electrophysiology as having attained a mastery of knowledge in their respective specialty. One of the following designations should be included with the title and certifications of these qualified health care professionals:

CCDS: Certified Cardiac Device Specialist

CEPS: Certified Cardiac Electrophysiology Specialist

A comprehensive list of IBHRE certified professionals can be found on our website at www.IBHRE.org



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