



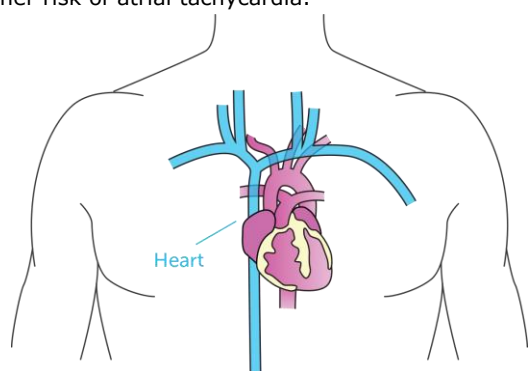
This sheet explains how atrial tachycardia affects adults with repaired congenital heart disease (CHD).

Key points

- Atrial tachycardia is a very fast heartbeat that is not normal.
- Symptoms include feeling like your heart is beating too fast (palpitations), chest pain, shortness of breath or dizziness.
- A procedure called catheter ablation and medicines are some choices for treating atrial tachycardia. Some people never need treatment.

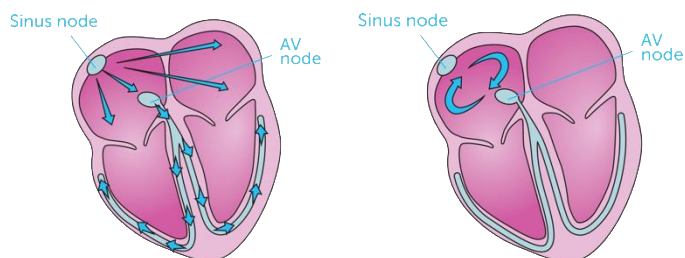
What is atrial tachycardia?

- Atrial tachycardia is an abnormal, fast heart rhythm coming from the top chambers of the heart.
- People who have had surgery to fix their CHD are at higher risk of atrial tachycardia.



Normal heart rhythm in the heart

Atrial tachycardia in the heart



(blue arrows = direction of heart rhythm)

Why would someone who had surgery to fix CHD get atrial tachycardia?

Atrial tachycardia can happen because of:

- Surgical scars
- Leaky or blocked heart valves (the valves in the heart that stop blood from flowing the wrong way)
- Lower heart muscle strength

What are atrial tachycardia symptoms?

- People with atrial tachycardia often have palpitations, the feeling of heartbeats that are not normal. The heart may feel like it's beating too fast and cause chest pain, shortness of breath or dizziness.
- Other people with atrial tachycardia have no symptoms. They usually don't find out that they have a heart rhythm problem until they see a doctor for a different reason.

How is atrial tachycardia diagnosed?

- We diagnose atrial tachycardia by reviewing your health history and heart rhythm. We may do an electrocardiogram (EKG or ECG), a test that measures your heart rate and rhythm. Or, we may give you a device you can use at home, like a Holter monitor or smartphone app.
- We can also record atrial tachycardia using a pacemaker or implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD) if you have one of these devices.

How is atrial tachycardia treated?

- **Watch and wait:** Short flare-ups that stop on their own may not need any treatment other than regular visits with your doctor.
- **Blood-thinning medicines:** Some people with atrial tachycardia need to take blood-thinning medicines to lower the risk of blood clots in the heart. Your cardiologist will let you know if blood thinners are right for you.
- **Heart rhythm medicines or EP study with catheter ablation:** If you have atrial tachycardia that causes bad symptoms, we might suggest treatments like heart rhythm medicines or an electrophysiology (EP) study with catheter ablation.
 - An EP study with catheter ablation is when we put thin, bendable tubes (called catheters) into large blood vessels, often in the groin. These tubes go into the heart to find and treat the rhythm that's not normal.
 - Most people spend a night in the hospital after this procedure.

What does having atrial tachycardia mean for the future?

- People who have one episode of atrial tachycardia most often have more episodes.
- Check with your cardiologist if you're having symptoms.

Contact us

- **For routine questions Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.:** Please call the Cardiology clinic at 617-355-2079.
- **For urgent issues after hours and on holidays or weekends:** Page the Electrophysiology doctor on call at 617-355-6369 pager #3737.