

Bradycardia

What is an bradycardia?

Bradycardia is an abnormal heart rhythm, referred to as an arrhythmia.

It is often defined as a heart rate that is too slow. For adults, a resting heartbeat of fewer than 50 beats per minute is classed as bradycardia.

Common signs and symptoms

Common signs and symptoms of bradycardia include:

- Heavy heart action
- Chest pain
- Extended periods of fatigue
- Struggling with exercise
- Shortness of breath
- Fainting or near-fainting
- Dizziness

What causes bradycardia?

There are a few different causes of bradycardia. It can be caused by a problem with the heart's natural pacemaker, or problems in the conduction pathways of the hearts, which prevent electrical impulses from passing properly from the upper chambers of the heart (the atria) to the lower chambers (the ventricles).

Other causes of bradycardia include issues with your metabolism, previous damage to the heart from heart disease or heart attack, as well as certain medications. It's important to talk to your health professional about whether your medication could be causing issues.

Why does bradycardia matter, and what are the risks to my health?

If left for long periods, bradycardia can cause heart failure or fainting. It can also result in severe chest pain, and variations in blood pressure, both low (hypotension) and high (hypertension).

What is the treatment for bradycardia?

There are a couple of ways to treat bradycardia. Your health professional will work with you to rectify underlying conditions, including stopping medication that might be causing the bradycardia. In many cases, a pacemaker can be used to regulate the heart's rhythm to a normal rate when needed.