

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Palpitations**
- **Low Sodium Tips**
- **Low Sodium BBQ Sauce**
- **Hidden Sodium**

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What are Palpitations and Why do I have them?

What are Palpitations?

Palpitations are the sensation that the heart is beating abnormal or racing. Sometimes this is described as a fluttering or a skipped beat feeling in the chest. A palpitation is just a symptom, it is not a diagnosis. If palpitations are infrequent, short lived, and not associated with other symptoms, then further treatment may not be required. Common triggers for many people include stress, caffeine, certain medications, nicotine, alcohol, and sometimes exercise. However, palpitations can be a sign of an abnormal heart rhythm. If palpitations occur with other symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, lightheadedness, or fainting,



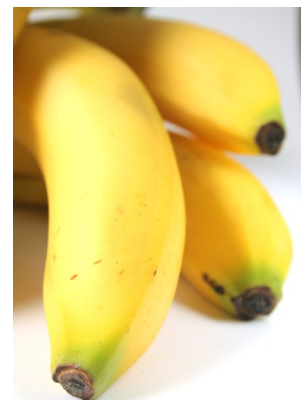
then medical evaluation is necessary. Medical evaluation should also be completed if the palpitations are persistent or becoming more frequent. During a medical evaluation, an EKG or electrocardiogram will be done. An EKG will show if an abnormal rhythm is present. It can also give more information about the heart. If the EKG is normal, more testing may still be needed based on symptoms. If the palpitations were not occurring

during the EKG, then a heart monitor may need to be worn for a longer period of time. If symptoms of chest pain or shortness of breath are present, then a stress test and/or echocardiogram may be ordered to evaluate the heart for structural heart disease and or blockage of the arteries. Other causes of palpitations include thyroid disease, anemia, and electrolyte imbalances (low potassium, low magnesium etc.). Hormonal changes and menopause can precipitate palpitations as well. These causes can be easily ruled out with routine blood work. If any of these causes are found, then treatment would be aimed at correcting that problem first. If an abnormal rhythm is diagnosed , then treatment is directed at the rhythm once all reversible causes are treated. Continued Page 3.....

Tip of the Month

Keeping a Low Sodium Diet

1. Eat dry peas and beans instead of canned ones.
2. Eat lower sodium cheeses such as cream cheese, ricotta, and mozzarella.
3. Instead of potato chips try unsalted popcorn.
4. Homemade soups without added salt instead of canned soups.
5. Fresh poultry, fish, or beef instead of cured or smoked bacon, sausage, ham, or hot dogs.
6. Eat fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables and avoid vegetables in sauces. (1).



Memphis Style BBQ Sauce



Recipe From "Breaking the Salt Habit" by Erik Williams.

Ingredients:

1 Tb Olive Oil
 1\2 cup Onion (chopped)
 5 Garlic Cloves (chopped)
 2 cups NSA Ketchup
 1\2 cup Cider Vinegar
 1\2 cup Dark Brown Sugar (packed)
 2 Tb Worcestershire sauce
 2 Tb Lemon Juice
 2 Tb Honey
 2 Tb Dry Mustard
 1\2 tsp Black Pepper
 1\4 tsp Cayenne Pepper

Directions:

1. In medium saucepan, combine oil, garlic, and onion and cook about 5 minutes until onion and garlic soften.
2. Add remaining ingredients, and simmer 15-20 minutes.
3. Strain out onion and garlic before eating, if desired.

Nutrition Info

Yields 2.5 cups (30 Tb)
 1 Serving = 1 Tb

Calories: 73
 Total Fat: <1g
 Sat Fat: 0g
 Cholesterol: 0
 Potassium: 289mg
 Carbohydrates: 17g
 Protein: 0g
 Fiber: 0g
 Sugar: 5g
 Sodium: 28mg

Quote of the Month: "Without self discipline, success is impossible, period." Lou Holtz

Bible Verse of the Month:

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life" John 6:47.

Did you Know?



Did you know that cottage cheese is very high in sodium? This is just one of many "healthy" foods that has a high sodium content that may be unrealized. In the last week I have had two patients that did not know that cottage cheese was high in sodium so I figured there must be more people out there that needed to know. The average content of sodium in cottage cheese around 800mg for 1 cup. There are a few brands that offer a no added salt version that are much lower in sodium content. Salad dressings are next on the list. While the intentions may be good in eating a salad, if the wrong salad dressing is used, it can turn into a very high sodium meal. Many salad dressings can range from 230-550mg of sodium per serving. A serving is general small, around 2 tablespoons.

Bread is another unassuming food that can be high in sodium. There is a lot of variance among the bread companies but just know that many breads can have 200mg or more per slice. If you are making a sandwich, this can be a real issue. So read the labels before you buy. Speaking of sandwich, lets make one. Two slices of bread, one slice of American cheese, and one slice of ham. On average the bread will run around 300 (on the low end), the cheese will run around 250mg, and the ham usually around 300mg as well. In total, not counting any condiments, we are up to 850mg for just the sandwich. With that, if you are on a low sodium diet, "not adding" salt to your meal in many cases is just not enough. Read the labels before you buy the foods and know your serving size. That is the only way to really stay on a low sodium diet. (3).

There are several different abnormal heart rhythms or arrhythmias that exist. Each has their own individual treatment. More than one arrhythmia can exist at a time. Common treatments for all arrhythmias include avoiding or limiting any stimulants. This includes caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, certain cough or cold medications, and medications that keep you awake. Some breathing treatments or inhalers may also cause abnormal heart rhythms, however these medications cannot always be avoided or changed. Eating a heart healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly, staying hydrated, and getting enough sleep are also recommended.

After these general recommendations, specific treatments are recommended by a cardiologist based on the individual and the type of arrhythmia present. Treatments in many cases involve medications to help slow the heart down or prevent the rhythm from occurring. Some abnormal heart rhythms may require blood thinners as part of the treatment. Certain arrhythmias may be treated with a procedure called an ablation. Others may require a pacemaker or defibrillator.

To sum up, palpitations can reflect a bigger problem like an arrhythmia. Most arrhythmias are treatable once diagnosed but the key is to get a diagnosis. So if you have palpitations that are not easily treated by avoiding some of the triggers discussed above, then seek medical treatment. (2).