

PAROXYSMAL SUPRAVENTRICULAR TACHYCARDIA (PSVT)

Paroxysmal supraventricular tachycardia (PSVT) is a spontaneous, faster than normal heartbeat. The normal heart rate for adults is 60 to 100 beats per minute, and heart rates faster than 100 are called tachycardia. Whenever the part of the nervous system controlling the electrical activity of the heart is stimulated, the heart rate may increase, sometimes as high as 300 beats per minute. Factors and conditions associated with PSVT include anxiousness, stress, smoking, caffeine, alcohol, and certain medications.

Symptoms *may* include:

- A sensation of a rapid heart beat
- Fainting or lightheadedness
- Chest pain
- Sensation of needing to cough
- Difficulty breathing, or the sensation of being unable to "catch your breath"

What *your* doctor can do:

- Diagnose PSVT by asking about your symptoms and performing a physical exam.
- Order an *ECG* (electrocardiogram which records the electrical activity of the heart).
- Prescribe medications if you have symptoms or episodes are frequent.
- Treatment may not be needed.

What *you* can do:

- If you experience symptoms, sit or lie down as soon as possible.
- Take in a breath, hold your nose and blow gently, like trying to "pop" your eardrums, or hold your breath and "bear down" as when trying to move the bowels.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, smoking, and any non-prescription medications that seem to produce symptoms.

Contact your doctor during regular business hours, if you have symptoms of tachycardia, or if your episodes are becoming more frequent.

Seek immediate medical assistance, if you have difficulty breathing, fainting or lightheadedness, dizziness, or chest pain!