

## Managing the effects of on the body

### Palpitations

#### What are palpitations?

Palpitations are heartbeats that are more noticeable to you. Your heart may feel like its pounding, fluttering, or beating irregularly, often just for a few seconds or minutes. Sometimes you may feel an extra or missed beat. These are known as ectopic beats.

Palpitations may seem alarming, but in most cases they're harmless and are not a sign of a serious problem.

#### What causes palpitations?

Palpitations are very common and are not just specific to the COVID recovery period. They may be caused by your increased awareness of a normal heart rhythm, for example due to anxiety, pregnancy, fever or exercise. They may also occur with certain drinks such as coffee or energy drinks as well as some medications.

In a small number of cases, palpitations can be due to the occurrence of an abnormal heart rhythm. An abnormal heart rhythm is known as a 'cardiac arrhythmia'. Cardiac arrhythmias are rarely dangerous.

#### When should I seek medical attention?

You do not usually need to see a GP if the palpitations pass quickly and only happen occasionally. They're unlikely to be caused by a serious problem and probably will not need treatment.

But it's a good idea to see a GP if:

- The palpitations last a long time, do not improve or get worse
- You have a history of heart problems
- You're concerned about the palpitations

#### When should I seek urgent medical attention?

You should seek urgent medical attention by phoning 999 if you experience palpitations which are associated with

- Chest pain
- Dizziness
- Blackouts or loss of consciousness