

Patient Information

AV Nodal Reentrant Tachycardia (AVNRT)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- A heart rhythm condition where the heart rate can become abnormally fast
- A type of supraventricular tachycardia (SVT).
- This is related to a “short circuit” in the electrical connections of the heart located in the region of the AV node (part of the normal electrical conduction system of the heart).
- Episodes of fast heart rates tend to be brief, usually minutes in duration.
- Generally not dangerous (this will not cause a cardiac arrest), but certainly can be associated with very bothersome symptoms.
- Can occur in patients of all ages.
- Not necessarily associated with other heart problems.

SYMPTOMS

- Palpitations; perception of a fast or forceful heart beat
- Chest discomfort
- Shortness of breath
- Lightheadedness

DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

- EKG
- Heart rhythm monitor (Holter or Event monitor)
- Electrophysiologic (“EP”) study; an invasive catheter based procedure where the doctor can “map” out the electrical system of the heart

TREATMENT

- Vagal maneuvers (bearing down, forceful coughing) can stop episodes of fast heartbeats.
- Medications that slow down the heart rate (beta blockers, calcium channel blockers)
- Radiofrequency ablation; most often curative. Involves essentially cauterizing inside the heart at the site of the “short circuit”. Part of the EP study, see above.

FOR MORE INFORMATION or to make an appointment at URMC Cardiology at Highland Hospital, please call (585) 341-6780 or visit us online at www.highlandheart.urmc.edu