

# 9 Reasons Your Heart Is Racing— That Are Completely Normal

A racing heart may seem like a troublesome problem, but in most cases, it's a typical response to something else going on in the body.

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## Why is my heart racing?



Considering the incredible job your heart does—keeping you alive, no less, by pumping blood to provide your body with the oxygen and nutrients it needs—you probably don't often think about how hard it works every second of the day. To be precise, your heart beats anything from 60 to 100 beats a minute. (That's between 86,400 and 144,000 beats a day.) If your heart beats more than 100 times per minute, it's known as tachycardia. It might sound serious, but it's unlikely to be a sign of a heart attack. Here are nine more probable reasons your heart is racing.

## Stress



When stress releases catecholamines or hormones like adrenaline or cortisol, these increase heart rate and blood pressure, which results in an elevated pulse, explains [\*\*South Florida cardiologist Adam Splaver, MD, from NanoHealth Associates\*\*](#). This is a normal response to stress and resolves itself when you deal with the stress. Try relaxation exercises, deep breathing, yoga, and tai chi to quell the anxiousness. Here are more ways to prevent stress and ward off heart disease.

## Too many stimulants



Stimulants like caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, and medicines for ADHD can also increase blood pressure and give you a racing heart. If these are triggers for you, stick to a healthy diet and limit your intake of caffeine. The Mayo Clinic says adults can have up to 400 milligrams of caffeine a day—the equivalent of four cups of coffee, 10 cans of soda, or two energy drinks.

## Dehydration



When you are dehydrated, your effective blood volume decreases, which lowers blood pressure. This, in turn, forces your heart to work harder and beat faster to compensate. To recover from dehydration, stop what you are doing and rest in a cool place, such as in the shade or an air-conditioned room. Put your feet up, remove all excess items of clothing, and drink a water, juice, or a sports drink to replace fluids and minerals. Drink two quarts of cool liquids over the next two to four hours and continue to drink plenty of fluids in the next 24 hours. WebMD suggests mixing one quart of water, 1/2 teaspoon of table salt, and six teaspoons of sugar for an inexpensive, at-home rehydration drink.

## Anxiety



Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the United States, according to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, affecting an estimated 40 million adults. Anxiety increases stress hormones that increase heart rate and blood pressure, explains **Splaver**. Don't miss these ways to reduce your risk of heart disease.

## Lack of sleep



One common cause of a racing heart is poor sleep. Lack of sleep increases stress hormones, which drive up your heart rate and blood pressure. The National Sleep Foundation recommends seven to nine hours of sleep per night for adults.

## Pain



According to an article published in *Mayo Clinical Proceedings*, acute pain triggers a stress response that can lead to increased blood pressure, faster heart rate, dilated pupils, and higher blood levels of cortisol, a stress hormone. Whether the pain is caused by a fracture, a sprain, an open wound, a burn, or a condition like appendicitis or pancreatitis, treating the underlying cause will return the heart to its normal rate. Look out for these signs you could be heading for a heart attack.

## Pregnancy



During pregnancy, a woman's heart is under increased demands due to the needs of the fetus. According to a Duke University Medical Center article published in the *Merck Manual*, by the end of pregnancy, the uterus is receiving one-fifth of a mother's blood supply, and cardiac output (the amount of blood pumped by the heart) increases by 30 to 50 percent. This results in a pregnancy heart rate of 80 to 90 beats per minute, and it's usually perfectly normal. If you have any concerns, however, make an appointment with your OB/GYN to get the all-clear.

## Thyroid problems



Your thyroid gland pumps out a variety of hormones that control and direct your major organs. Insufficient thyroid hormones (hypothyroidism) can slow your heart rate, while excess thyroid hormones (hyperthyroidism) increase your heart rate. Check to see if you have any other silent thyroid symptoms you should watch out for. A wide range of medications are available to treat hyperthyroidism; beta blockers can be prescribed specifically to deal with a quick heart rate.

## Cold or fever



If you have signs of a cold or fever, like a high temperature, sneezing, and coughing, your heart rate may increase. This is because your body needs to work harder than usual to fight the infection. As soon as you the cold passes, your heart rate should return to normal. Be sure you don't ignore these signs that you actually *do* have an unhealthy heart.

<https://www.rd.com/health/conditions/tachycardia-causes/>