My heart seems to skip a beat. Might I have a heart problem?

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It’s very common for the heart to occasionally skip a beat, beat faster, slow down or flutter. As many as 25 percent of U.S. adults over the age of 40 develop an irregular heartbeat. Sometimes this irregularity is a heart arrhythmia.

The most common cardiac arrhythmia is atrial fibrillation, also called AFib. The CDC reports that up to 6 million Americans have AFib. Although many arrhythmias are harmless, some can be serious. Your doctor can determine if yours is potentially dangerous and if you need treatment for it.

Some arrhythmias are easily treated by reducing caffeine in coffee or soft drinks. Certain substances such as decongestant cold medicines, nicotine and methamphetamines cause arrhythmias, so stopping these is important.

Panic and worry won’t help your heart. Your medical team can show you how to live with an arrhythmia without feeling constant anxiety about it. Seek immediate medical help if you experience shortness of breath, weakness, dizziness, fainting, near fainting, chest pain or chest discomfort.

Find out more about heart disease at the World Heart Day website.

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http://beta.docker.hepmag.com/article/heart-seems-skip-beat-might-heart-problem