



**Royal Berkshire**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Tachycardia

## (very fast heart beat)

Information and advice  
for patients

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This leaflet is for people experiencing tachycardia and contains a number of actions that may slow your pulse down to normal. It is worth trying them all as some may work better for you than others.

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If your pulse is beating very fast

1. Try blowing out a deep breath without letting go for 10 seconds. This is best done by pretending your thumb is a balloon and trying to blow it up in your mouth for 10 seconds. This is the easiest and most effective trick which you can use.
2. Try drinking ice-cold water or putting your head into very cold water for a few seconds.
3. Try pressing on your neck pulse, only one side at a time, for 10 seconds.

If your fast heart rate/palpitations continue for more than two hours, or if you are getting short of breath or faint, or chest pains before two hours, you should be seen in hospital.

Telephone the Cardiac Care Unit on 0118 322 6528. Tell the staff on the Cardiac Care Unit that you are a patient of the Cardiology Unit, that you have tachycardia and are in the middle of an attack. On confirming that there is a bed available for you, get someone to bring you to the Cardiac

Care Unit, situated on Level 1 Battle Block, via the Cardiology Outpatients department. This is close to the front of North Block. Patients can be dropped off in the North Block car park outside the old RBH frontage on London Road but parking spaces are limited here so we advise drivers to park in the multi storey car park once the patient has been dropped off.

On arrival at the Cardiac Care Unit, you will be expected and treated immediately. Sometimes, the Cardiac Care Unit will be full, in which case you will be told when you telephone to go directly to the Emergency Department (A&E).

If during your assessment in the Cardiology Department we have not managed to obtain an ECG during one of your attacks of tachycardia, please ask the nurse in the Cardiac Care Unit or Accident and Emergency to give you a copy of the ECG recorded during an attack.

## Useful contacts

Royal Berkshire Hospital	0118 322 5111
Cardiac Reception Enquiries	0118 322 6573
Cardiac Appointments	0118 322 5274
Cardiac Support Nurses	0118 322 6638
Cardiac Care Unit	0118 322 6684
Trust website:	<a href="http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk">www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk</a>
NHS 111:	111
NHS Choices website:	<a href="http://www.nhs.uk">www.nhs.uk</a>
British Heart Foundation:	<a href="http://www.bhf.org.uk">www.bhf.org.uk</a>
West Berkshire Heart Support Group – ‘Heartbeats’	
Heartbeats website:	<a href="http://www.heartbeats-berkshire.co.uk">www.heartbeats-berkshire.co.uk</a>

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This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

Written by the Department of Cardiology

Reviewed: January 2018

Review due: January 2020

