

Heart Arrhythmias

Heart Block or
Bundle Branch Block



Heart block (atrioventricular heart block (AV block) or bundle branch block (BBB))

This is where there is a blockage or delay in the electrical signals that control the heart's beats. It can cause the heart to beat more slowly than normal, or to pump abnormally. Heart block is categorised as first-, second- or third-degree, with first-degree being the least severe. Third-degree heart block is the most severe, and can be fatal. Some people are born with this condition, but it usually occurs due to ageing. Conditions that damage the heart can cause heart block, including coronary artery disease, conditions that weaken the heart muscle, and certain cancers.

People with first-degree heart block may not experience any symptoms. Symptoms of heart block can include:



- Dizziness or fainting



- Feeling like your heart has paused for a beat



- Shortness of breath



- Nausea



- Fatigue



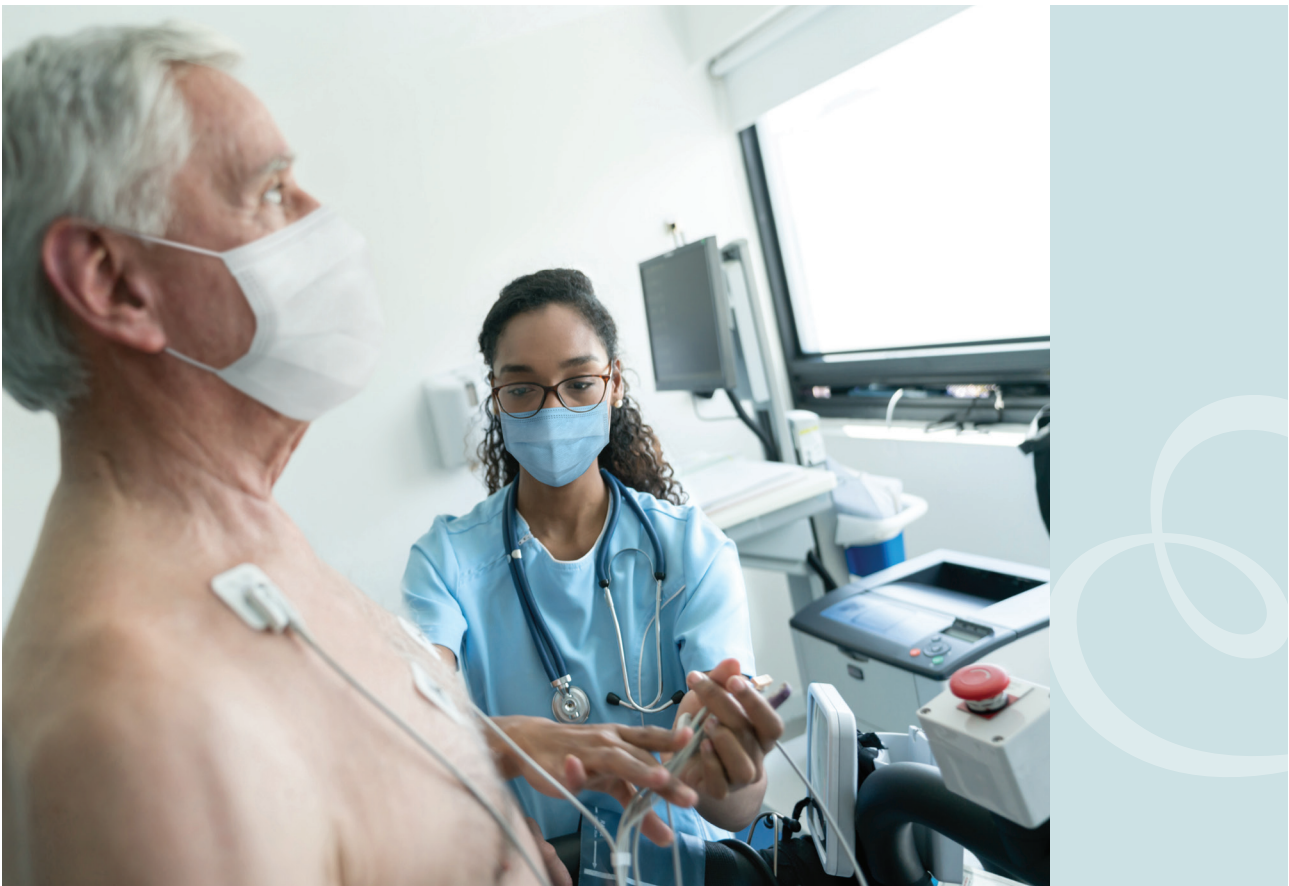
- Irregular heartbeat



- Chest pain


Possible complications of more severe heart block include damage to other internal organs, low blood pressure and cardiac arrest. So proper diagnosis and treatment are important.

Treatment depends on the type of heart block that you have. First-degree heart block may not need any treatment. For more severe heart block, a pacemaker may be needed. This is a device that's implanted in the body that sends electrical signals to the heart and help it keep a steady heart rhythm. Risks associated with getting a pacemaker include: infection following implantation of the device, bruising or bleeding at the site of implantation, blood clots, damage to blood vessels or nerves, bleeding between the lung and chest wall, collapsed lung, problems with the device stimulating muscles other than the heart, or problems with the device or its leads moving within the body. These risks are uncommon, and your doctor will discuss the risks and benefits of this treatment with you. A pacemaker can help improve your daily life, and allow you to get back to your usual activities.





Hearts4heart supports, educates and advocates for Australians living with atrial fibrillation and other heart conditions. Join our community and the conversation.

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