

Cardiac Rhythm Abnormalities Level II

CARDIAC RATE or RHYTHM ABNORMALITIES

Level II

(No Level I)

Skill Level: RN

Definition: Irregular apical pulse; pulse rate below 60 or above 100 beats per minute; apical-radial pulse deficit; abnormal rate and rhythm or configuration on EKG.

MILD	
<p>Subjective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "My heart is: skipping beats, beating funny, beating too fast/too slow, pounding in my chest."• History of what triggers episode(s).• History of what relieves episode(s).	<p>Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential for Anxiety: Perceived or actual cardiac rhythm abnormality.• Alteration in comfort.• Potential for impaired/decreased cardiac output.
<p>Objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vital Signs normal:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Pulse - radial and apical, strength, pattern, rate above 40 but less than 120.○ Blood Pressure may be elevated.• No chest pain, syncope, shortness of breath, diaphoresis, nausea, or focal weakness.• Blood pressure normal for patient and not below 85 systolic.• Review medical history and medications for compliance.• Review for history of pacemaker/ICD placement.	<p>Plan: At nursing discretion may use any of the below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• EKG/rhythm strip. Discuss results with provider if reads abnormal.• Call provider if irregular heartbeat and patient has a history of cardiac problems. Discuss possible ambulatory cardiac monitoring device and other options with provider.• Vital signs and monitor ABC's. If patient's vitals are stable and normal and no prior history of cardiac problems, consider provider appointment and reassurance.• If patient complains of chest pain, syncope, shortness of breath, diaphoresis, nausea or has unstable vital signs, treat as possible Myocardial Infarction, and initiate full emergency treatment.

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Nursing Education:

1. If the patient has no symptomatic complaints such as chest pain, shortness of breath, nausea, syncope and pulse is above 40 but below 120 and the EKG reveals an SR with 6 or fewer ectopic beats per minute, blood pressure is within normal limits, this is likely to be a single, self-limited episode.
2. If subjective/objective findings indicate anxiety caused, refer to Anxiety protocol; consider BHS referral.
3. If this is a reoccurring episode, but the patient's vitals are stable, refer to provider.
4. Be sure to have provider review all EKG's even when read normal by machine.
5. If the patient is unstable, monitor vital signs, administer O2, initiate IV infusion, transport to local hospital emergency room.
6. There are various ambulatory cardiac monitoring devices available; the use of these devices should be explored with the provider.

Patient Teaching:

1. Reassure and help with relaxation techniques.
2. Explain some possible causes such as smoking, caffeine products, and stress/anxiety.
3. Rest and restrict activity based on tolerance and severity of episode.
4. Notify practitioner if any problems or heart rate remains less than 50 or greater than 120 for 5-10 minutes and if not tolerated by patient.

APPROVED:

Medical Services Manager

Date

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2/24/2015

Medical Director

Date

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