

Hearts-a-Flutter

Common heartbeat problem can cause fatigue



Dr. Christopher Stees

An irregular heartbeat could be the cause of your shortness of breath, your fatigue or your inability to exercise for very long.


Atrial fibrillation—the technical term for an irregular heartbeat that occurs in the atrium, or upper portion, of the heart—occurs in 10 percent of American adults, says Christopher Stees, DO, a cardiologist who specializes in electrophysiology at Parker Adventist Hospital. A person's risk of developing the problem increases with age. Heart disease, obesity and sleep apnea along with the use of dietary stimulants, illicit drugs and alcohol also increase a person's risk.

Sometimes described as a racing heart, this condition can cause the heart to beat upwards of 100 to 175 beats per minute, compared with the normal 60 to 100 beats per minute. It develops when the electrical connection between the lower and upper chambers of the heart becomes overwhelmed, causing the heart to beat too rapidly or irregularly.

While many people may never feel symptoms, others may experience palpitations, shortness of breath, fainting spells or exercise intolerance. "Although the fast heart rates associated with atrial fibrillation are usually not dangerous, it can affect a person's quality of life," Stees says.

Atrial fibrillation is most often treated with medications. If medications don't work or the patient cannot take the medications, it can be treated with a procedure called catheter ablation. During this procedure, the electrophysiologist maps the electrical pathways of the heart and cauterizes the tissue generating the problematic impulses.



Parker Hospital's cardiac care program specializes in emergency intervention and nonsurgical treatments for cardiovascular disease. It has received the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines—Coronary Artery Disease (CAD) Silver Performance Achievement Award for excellence in cardiac care. Parker Hospital's emergency room ranks in the 99th percentile for patient satisfaction. 

FREE cholesterol test

Date: Friday, Feb. 18


Time: 7–10 a.m.

Location: Parker Adventist Hospital Inspiration Room, Garden Level Conference Center at West Entrance

Get a complete cholesterol profile, including HDL, LDL and triglyceride levels. Fasting is required.

Screenings are limited to the first 500 to register; reservations are REQUIRED and must be made by Feb. 16. For complete information or to register, call 303-777-6877, ext. 1.

\$99 heart scans

A coronary artery calcium screen is a scan of your heart that can help doctors look for deadly plaque buildup. It is recommended for men over 45 and women over 55 who have other risk factors for heart disease, including family history, being overweight or having diabetes, high cholesterol or high blood pressure. **Parker Adventist Hospital is offering this screening for \$99 (normally \$333) from Feb. 14 through March 18.** A physician's referral is recommended but not required. Results will be sent to your doctor. To schedule your scan, call 303-269-4500. 

Parker Adventist Hospital



9395 Crown Crest Blvd., Parker, CO 80138

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Tue, Feb. 22 • 6:30–8 p.m.

Heart rhythm disorders (arrhythmias) are problems that affect the electrical system of the heart muscle. One type of arrhythmia, atrial fibrillation, affects millions of Americans. If left untreated, this disorder can lead to congestive heart failure or stroke. Join cardiac electrophysiologist Christopher Stees, DO, and learn more about symptoms and treatments.

Resolutions for a Healthier You

Thurs, Feb. 24 • Noon–1:30 p.m.

A new year gives you the opportunity for a new you. Join internal medicine specialist Shauna Gulley, MD, as she discusses the latest tips on heart health, diet, recommended screenings, supplements and more.

This is your opportunity to get the latest health tips and up-to-date information.

Join us in our **NEW** conference center located on the garden level at the west entrance for these seminars!