

Supraventricular Tachycardia (SVT) in Infants

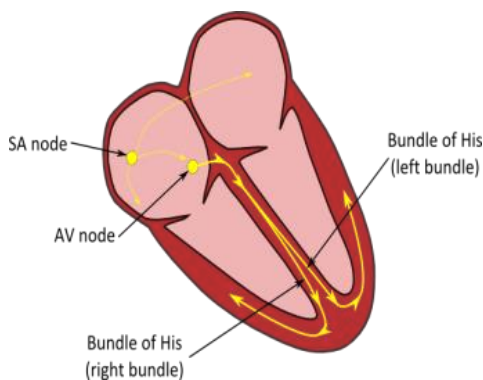


Children's Heart Centre
4480 Oak Street, Vancouver, BC V6H 3V4
604-875-2345 1-888-300-3088
www.bcchildrens.ca

What does it mean that my baby has SVT (fast heartbeat)?

Normal Heartbeat

The SA node is a group of specialized cells that tell the heart when to beat. These cells send out tiny pulses of electricity that travel from the SA node to the AV node. The AV node then sends the electricity to the lower half of the heart telling the bottom chambers to beat.



SVT (Fast Heartbeat)

SVT stands for supraventricular tachycardia. Tachycardia means fast heartbeat. There are different types of SVT. Usually the cause in infants is an extra electrical pathway that allows for a short circuit. In some children, there can be an extra timer that sets a fast heartbeat. SVT can start without warning.



If your baby is lethargic or not responding, call 911 and explain that your baby has SVT.

If your baby is working hard to breathe or has difficulty feeding **call 604-875-2161 and ask for the cardiologist on call.**

If your baby is stable: still alert, their colour is normal, and limbs warm you can monitor them at home for _____ and try one of two “vagal maneuvers.”

Vagal Maneuvers

1) Ice on the face

Mix ice and water in a baggie (or use frozen peas). Apply to your baby's face, covering the nose and mouth, for less than 10 seconds. The quick shock and breath hold causes the vagal stimulation (the heart slows down).



2) Hold upside down

Hold your baby securely along the length of your arm. Tip their head down quickly (almost upside down), supporting the head and neck, for a few seconds.

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If these maneuvers are going to work, they will do so immediately.

If SVT goes beyond ____min., or happens twice in 24 hours, call the cardiologist on call. Even if your baby looks well, you may need to seek medical attention at your nearest urgent care facility if the SVT is not stopping.



604-875-2161 ask for Cardiology on call

What do I need to do to care for my baby at home?

Monitor your baby's heart rate

Listen to your baby's chest with a stethoscope for 30 seconds and then double that number to find the number of beats/minute. Ex. 50 beats in 30 seconds = 100 beats/minute.

Pulse Check: Feel for a pulse for 30 seconds and double the number for beats/min. It's easiest to check your baby's pulse in their upper arm (brachial pulse).



Measurement frequency: Your cardiologist will tell you how often you need to routinely check your baby's pulse. Working these checks into your daily routine (eg with diaper changes) can help you remember to do them.

Monitor for changes in your baby

Check your baby's pulse whenever their routine appears off, they have any difficulty breathing, their colour changes, or they have difficulty eating.

Record keeping

If your baby is stable during an episode of SVT, monitor for ____ minutes and record their heart rate, the date, time start/stop, and how it stopped (with intervention or spontaneously).

Follow your doctor's plan

Your cardiologist will make an individualized plan with you based on your child.

My baby's medications:
