KNOW THE FACTS – MYTHS AND REALITY ABOUT ARRHYTHMIAS

**MYTH**
If I have a fast heart rate, it just means I am stressed or am drinking too much caffeine.

**REALITY**
Factors like stress, caffeine intake and exercise can cause a temporary increase in heart rate. However, increased heart rate occurring more regularly or over a longer period of time can be a sign of other conditions and should be examined by a medical professional.

**MYTH**
If you have arrhythmia, you cannot exercise.

**REALITY**
For many arrhythmias, physical activity is possible and even beneficial. Talk to your medical professional about exercising if you have been diagnosed with arrhythmia.

**MYTH**
I cannot develop arrhythmia as I am not old enough.

**REALITY**
Arrhythmias can develop at any age. You should be aware of arrhythmia symptoms, even if you are young.

**MYTH**
Arrhythmias develop by chance, there is nothing I can do to reduce my risk.

**REALITY**
While some arrhythmias are congenital or related to other conditions, there are several modifiable risk factors. Leading a healthy lifestyle, including moderating alcohol and caffeine intake, not smoking, and maintaining a healthy weight, all reduce your risk of arrhythmia and other cardiovascular disease.

**MYTH**
My heart problems are not important.

**REALITY**
You matter and should be cared for. Listen to your heart. If you are having arrhythmia symptoms, talk to your doctor and get diagnosed/treated.

**MYTH**
Having a device like a pacemaker or ICD is dangerous.

**REALITY**
Having a pacemaker or an ICD implanted is usually very safe and carries a low risk of complications. A pacemaker or ICD will only be prescribed by a doctor, and they will be able to explain the potential risks and benefits of having a device.

**MYTH**
I'd rather wait to see my doctor because I am afraid of what he/she will tell me.

**REALITY**
Don't delay seeing your doctor if you are experiencing symptoms of irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia). Trust your doctor and get the care you need.

**MYTH**
Sudden cardiac arrest is the same thing as a heart attack.

**REALITY**
Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is NOT the same as a heart attack. Think of a heart attack as a plumbing problem whereas SCA is more of an electrical problem. A heart attack is typically caused by a blockage in a blood vessel to the heart muscle. This can permanently damage part of the heart. SCA is an electrical malfunction that disrupts the timing and order of the pumping action. A heart attack can lead to cardiac arrest.

**MYTH**
If I have arrhythmia, I will need to take drugs to treat it.

**REALITY**
Treatment depends on the type of arrhythmia. Some arrhythmias do not require treatment. Others may require a device to help regulate your heart rhythm.

Sources: