

I probably won't die in my sleep any time soon!

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Thursday, 23 February 2012 08:51 -

I had the fun experience of being hooked up to an ECG machine yesterday. It was not an emergency situation or anything like that, but this past Monday when I was laying on the couch, I noticed my heart's rhythm was a little bit off. I thought it was odd, but figured it would pass, and I didn't notice anything again until I went to bed Tuesday night. At that point I noticed my heart was skipping about every eighth or tenth beat. It was going something like this -- beat beat beat.....(pause).... beat beat beat. Needless to say, that was a little disconcerting. However, I didn't feel any dizziness, shortness of breath, or really any other symptoms aside from the odd beating. I didn't die in my sleep, but that was one thing that kept crossing my mind as a possibility. Yesterday at work, while I was sitting at my desk I started feeling it happening again, so I called my doctor and made an appointment for that day to discuss it. The doctor couldn't see me until 4:15, and meanwhile at work my heart was fluttering all day. It's really distracting, to say the least, so I don't think I really got much useful work done yesterday. They measured my pulse with a pulse oximeter and were surprised that it was only 41. So I explained my workout habits to the doctor and she understood completely (She seems to have an ultra-runner mindset as well, which I think helps her understanding nut jobs like myself). Once I explained the symptoms I was having she listed a bunch of things that it probably wasn't (which knocked off most of the more seriously concerning possibilities). Wouldn't you know it my heart had been doing this crazy thing all day at work, but the moment I get to the doctor's office it is behaving perfectly normally. The doctor listened to the heart beat for a bit and explained that it was really strong and she wasn't hearing anything abnormal to be concerned about. The next step was to hook me up to an ECG machine. The nurse wheeled the machine in and started attaching all the probes to me, but apparently I have a little too much hair on my chest, so they had to shave two little splotches off (that are now itching like crazy today). I was surprised at how quickly the machine was able to run and print out the graphs of my heartbeat. The whole process took less than 30 seconds. The doctor looked over the results and didn't see anything unusual in the shape of the beats on the graph, so the only real concern is that the rhythm is abnormal sometimes. Fortunately, though, all of the movements that make up the heartbeat look normal on the ECG output. So we're not sure exactly what the cause is. The doctor had the lab draw some blood to make sure my electrolytes are in balance and that thyroid activity is normal (Thyroid underactivity is something I've had complications with in the past, so I'll be interested to see the results this time). The doctor suggested that I cut my caffeine intake -- my one vice at only ~100mg/day -- to see what would happen. In the meantime, though, the doctor assured me that I'm most likely not going to die in my sleep. What a surprising relief it is to hear that from a medical professional!