



## Vagal Maneuvers

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### Medical Procedure: 4.35

#### Description and Indications

The degree of stimulation in the vagus nerve affects the heart rate. The greater the degree of vagal stimulation, the more the vagus nerve will SLOW the heart rate inhibiting the SA node. Therefore, vagal stimulation is modality in the treatment of clinically dangerous supraventricular tachycardias (SVT) due to primary cardiac rhythm disturbances, such as paroxysmal reentry disorders.

#### Contraindications

Carotid sinus massage should not be used in patients with inequality of carotid pulses or past history of carotid surgery (endarterectomy). Do not use these procedures to treat SVT secondary to hypovolemia. Due to the risks of the procedure, it should only be employed when the SVT itself poses a significant clinical danger.

#### Warnings

Carotid sinus massage may break off a plaque in the elderly and patients who have diabetes or hypertension, resulting in a CVA secondary to the embolus. Bradycardia or asystole may occur during stimulation, hence, ALL vagal stimulations must be performed under constant ECG monitoring.

#### Methods

**Valsalva Maneuver** - This is the least dangerous method and should be used before others medical methods are attempted. The patient is instructed to take a deep breath and bear down, trying to turn their face red. The breath and pressure should be held as long as possible. The procedure may be repeated. Carotid sinus message, (cold water immersion is not recommended.)