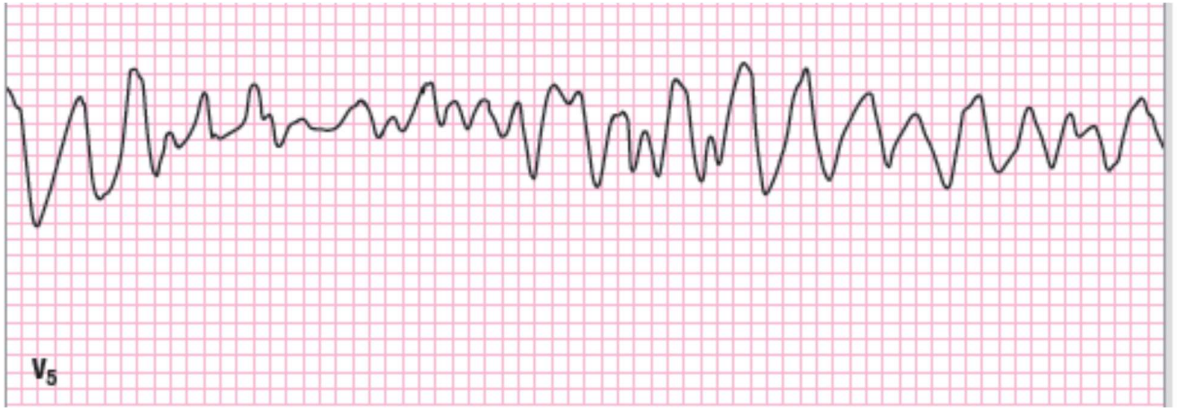
• Ventricular fibrillation (VF)



- An extremely rapid and irregular ventricular rhythm demonstrating:
  - Chaotic and irregular deflections of varying amplitude and contour
  - Absence of distinct P waves, QRS complexes, and T waves

VF is a lethal arrhythmia that can nearly always be converted into a stable rhythm when defibrillation is performed within the first minute. Successful cardioversion occurs in only 25% when delayed by 4 to 5 minutes.

Artifact, such as caused by rapid arm movement or a loose electrode on telemetry or Holter recording, can mimic VF.

“Coarse” VF has large amplitude fibrillatory waves, while “fine” VF has small amplitude fibrillatory waves often presenting as a baseline with small undulations.

The “vulnerable period” for the ventricle refers to the time during repolarization (the T wave) when a VPC (often called a “critically-timed” VPC) may initiate VF. Usually this region involves the top of the T wave and is only a few msec in duration.