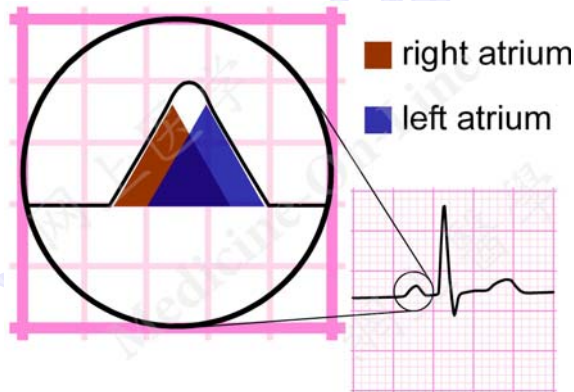


Right and Left Atrial Abnormalities

(NB: “Atrial abnormality” is a term being used increasingly in place of “atrial enlargement”, “atrial dilatation” or “atrial hypertrophy”.)

Look for signs of atrial abnormalities in leads in which the P wave is most prominent: usually lead II, but also leads III, aVF, and V1.



In sinus rhythm the right atrial depolarization wave (brown) precedes that of the left atrium (blue) and the combined depolarization waves, the P wave, is less than 120 ms wide and less than 2.5 mm high.

In right atrial abnormality, right atrial depolarization lasts longer than normal and its wave extends to the end of left atrial depolarization. Although the amplitude of the right atrial depolarization current remains unchanged, its peak now falls on top of that of the left atrial depolarization wave. As a result, the combined waves of right and left atrial depolarization, the P wave, is taller than normal (taller than 2.5 mm) but its width remains within 120 ms.

