

Three-Tiered Fetal Heart Rate Interpretation System

Category I

Category I FHR tracings include all of the following:

- **Baseline rate:** 110–160 beats per minute
- **Baseline FHR variability:** moderate
- Late or variable decelerations: absent
- Early decelerations: present or absent
- **Accelerations:** present or absent

Category II

Category II FHR tracings includes all FHR tracings not categorized as Category I or Category III. Category II tracings may represent an appreciable fraction of those encountered in clinical care.

Examples of Category II FHR tracings include any of the following:

Baseline rate

- Bradycardia not accompanied by absent baseline variability
- Tachycardia

Baseline FHR variability

- Minimal baseline variability
- Absent baseline variability with no recurrent decelerations
- Marked baseline variability

Accelerations

- Absence of induced accelerations after fetal stimulation

Periodic or episodic decelerations

- Recurrent variable decelerations accompanied by minimal or moderate baseline variability
- Prolonged deceleration more than 2 minutes but less than 10 minutes
- Recurrent late decelerations with moderate baseline variability
- Variable decelerations with other characteristics such as slow return to baseline, overshoots, or “shoulders”

Category III

Category III FHR tracings include either:

- Absent baseline FHR variability
and any of the following:
 - Recurrent late decelerations
 - Recurrent variable decelerations
 - Bradycardia
- Sinusoidal pattern

Abbreviation: FHR, fetal heart rate

Macones GA, Hankins GD, Spong CY, Hauth J, Moore T. The 2008 National Institute of Child Health and Human Development workshop report on electronic fetal monitoring: update on definitions, interpretation, and research guidelines. *Obstet Gynecol* 2008;112:661–6. (July, 2010)