QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR:

- What is Atrial Fibrillation (AFib)?
- What causes AFib?
- How do I know I have AFib?
- What are the signs and symptoms to look out for?
- What are the risk factors of AFib?
- What is an anticoagulant?
- How will having AFib impact on my daily activities?
- Is there anything I can do to help myself to manage or reduce my 'AFib episodes'?
- What are my treatment options for AFib?
- Can I exercise safely?
- Who do I contact for support, advice, or information about AFib?

AFib is the most common arrhythmia affecting 0.5% of the world's population.

If AFib is left untreated you are 3-5 times more likely to experience an AFib-related stroke, or it could even lead to heart failure.

If you have any questions, require support, advice, or additional information regarding patient resources and upcoming events, please contact:

www.afa-us.org

info@afa-us.org

To view our patient resources, scan the QR code below:

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Arrhythmia Alliance

AFAssociation

www.heartrhythmalliance.org

FOR PATIENTS & CAREGIVERS

Atrial Fibrillation (AFib)

This guide is to help your understanding of AFib

Discussion Guide

How do I know if I have Atrial Fibrillation?

Atrial fibrillation (AFib) is detected by an irregular pulse, and often accompanied by symptoms, such as chest pain, fatigue or shortness of breath. AFib occurs when chaotic electrical activity develops in the upper chambers or atria and completely takes over from the sinus node. As a result the atria no longer beats in an organized way and pumps less efficiently. The AV node will stop some of these very rapid impulses from traveling to the ventricles, but the ventricles will still beat irregularly and possibly rapidly.

Common Symptoms of AFib:

- Irregular pulse or rapid pulse
- Palpitations
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Fainting

Some people experience symptoms; however, this does not apply to everyone, and are considered 'asymptomatic'. Therefore, it is important to;

Know Your Pulse To Know Your Heart Rhythm
– *It could save your life!*

How is AFib detected?

AFib is detected by an irregular pulse. You can check your pulse via manual pulse check or a hand-held EKG device or Smartphone. Upon detection, your doctor will be able to assess your personal risk factor of experiencing an AFib-related stroke via the 'CHA2DS2-VASc' scoring system. Anticoagulation is vital in protecting you from experiencing an AFib-related stroke.



What causes AFib?

AFib is related to age - the older you become, the more likely you are to develop it. Other conditions, diseases, and factors can also increase your risk of developing AFib. There are several conditions associated with AFib:

- Stroke or TIA
- Heart failure
- High blood pressure
- Coronary heart disease or mitral valve disease
- Congenital heart disease
- Pneumonia
- Overactive thyroid
- Obesity
- Sleep apnea
- Dementia

What happens next?

Medications may be prescribed to help manage symptoms such as an irregular and often rapid heart rhythm. However, if you are unable to tolerate such medications, you might be offered a procedure such as a cardioversion, catheter ablation, LAAO (Left Atrial Appendage Occlusion) or a 'pace and ablate' (pacemaker and ablation). Your doctor will discuss the treatment options with you.

How will having AFib impact on my daily life?

Having AFib should not stand in the way of leading a normal life and carrying on with your daily activities much as before. If you have any questions, speak to your doctor, or contact our Patient Services Team.

What can I do to help myself?

- Regulate your blood pressure (cut down on your salt intake)
- Follow a healthy diet
- Maintain a healthy weight for you
- Exercise regularly (Yoga, Pilates, swimming)
- Limit or eliminate stimulants (alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, energy drinks)
- Keep anxiety/stress levels to a minimum (mindfulness, relaxation techniques and CBT can all alleviate stress)

AFib is likely to affect 1 in 3 individuals in their lifetime

