

# Atrial Fibrillation (AFib): What You Need to Know

2018

# Acknowledgements

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# What is AFib?

- **Atrial fibrillation** also known as **AFib**, is an irregular heartbeat. Your heart:
  - Flutters
  - Beats unevenly
  - Beats quickly
- You may not have any symptoms.
- With AFib, **you may be at a greater risk for heart attack or stroke.**



# What are the risk factors for AFib?

- Age 65+
- Family members with stroke
- Heart-related factors:
  - High blood pressure
  - Heart disease
  - Heart failure
  - Heart attack at young age



- Recent heart surgery
- Heart valve problems



# What are the risk factors for AFib?

- Lifestyle factors
  - Heavy alcohol use
  - Recreational drug use
  - Excessive caffeine intake
  - Smoking
  - Extreme stress



# What are the risk factors for AFib?

- Health issues
  - Overweight or obesity
  - Diabetes or high blood sugar
  - Thyroid problems
  - Kidney disease
  - Sleep apnea
  - Have had a stroke
  - Lung problems



# What are the symptoms of AFib?

- Fast, fluttering, or uneven heartbeat
- Dizzy or faint feeling
- Feeling very tired, even after sleeping or resting
- Normal day-to-day activities are hard to do



# What are other symptoms of AFib?

- Feeling short of breath
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Swelling in the legs
- Feeling stressed
- Mental confusion



*You may have no symptoms at all*



# What if you think you have AFib?

- Tell your nurse or doctor if you have any risk factors or symptoms
- Learn how to take your pulse
  - Track your rate and rhythm
    - Smart watch
    - Smart phone with attached monitor
- Learn how to take your blood pressure
- Pay attention to how you feel



# What your provider can do

- Health history & physical exam
- Echocardiogram
- Electrocardiogram EKG or ECG
- Exercise stress test
- Blood tests
- ECG monitor with recorder
  - Holter monitor, event recorder, Zio Patch, Loop recorder
  - Readings: few days to few weeks



# What can you do if you have AFib?

- You will work with your doctor or nurse on a plan that works for you
- You can **lower your risk for a stroke** by following lifestyle changes
  - This can help improve your overall health, too!



# What can you do if you have AFib?

- Lifestyle:
  - Eat a healthy diet with vegetables, fruits, whole grains and healthy fats
  - Don't smoke
  - Be physically active
  - Lower your stress
  - Reduce caffeine and alcohol use



# What can you do if you have AFib?

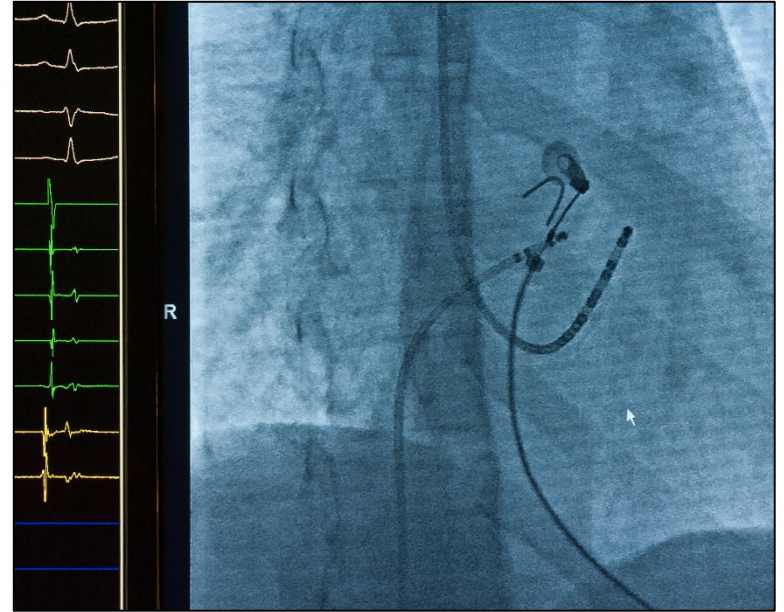
- Medicines:
  - Keep your heart from beating too fast
  - Changing your heartbeat to a normal rhythm with regular beats
  - Preventing blood clots or stroke





# What can you do if you have AFib?

- Surgical treatments:
  - Your health care provider may discuss surgical options for treating your AFib and to help keep your heartbeat regular.



# Managing risk factors and AFib

- By modifying your risk factors and treating your AFib, you can lower your risk for a stroke or heart failure.
- Make sure to ask your doctor or nurse about any questions you have.



# Questions

