

# About AFib

**Dr. Gillian Lautenbach, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, Penn Internal Medicine Associates**

Atrial fibrillation, which is also known as AFib, is a serious health condition. If you've been diagnosed with AFib, it's very important that you learn how to manage it, because it can lead to serious complications, such as stroke. Your doctor and healthcare team will be there to help you, but you're the most important team member, because you're the one who's living with it every day. In this video, you'll see how one patient learns about her atrial fibrillation and how to manage it.

Hi, Mrs. Williams, how are you doing today?

**Mrs. Williams, Patient**

I'm well. Thank you.

**Dr. Gillian Lautenbach, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, Penn Internal Medicine Associates**

Oh good. I wanted to check in on you today and see how you're doing managing your AFib.

**Mrs. Williams, Patient**

Okay. I am doing pretty well but I still have a few questions about it.

**Dr. Gillian Lautenbach, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, Penn Internal Medicine Associates**

Good. Good. That's pretty common. A lot of people do have a lot of questions, and I'm here to answer all of them. As you know, AFib is a condition of your heart in which you have an irregular rhythm, and it's caused by, a problem with the two upper, parts of your heart called the atria, and the atria can beat quickly, and that can lead to blood clots forming, and that's a very serious complication of AFib that can lead to strokes. That's why it's really important that, you understand, how to manage your atrial fibrillation.

**Mrs. Williams, Patient**

I'm feeling a lot better now, but at first I had pounding in my chest, and dizziness, and I, and I just didn't feel right.

**Dr. Gillian Lautenbach, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, Penn Internal Medicine Associates**

Those are some common symptoms. Other symptoms people might complain of are palpitations, or a fluttering in their chest. They may feel short of breath or tired when they exercise. Sometimes they feel dizzy, or like they might faint. So, those are pretty common symptoms, and we can help you figure out ways to try to manage those symptoms.

**Mrs. Williams, Patient**

So, so what causes AFib?

**Dr. Gillian Lautenbach, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, Penn Internal Medicine Associates**

Well, atrial fibrillation is associated, with a lot of other medical conditions. Including uncontrolled high blood pressure. That's one of the more common causes. It can also be caused by heart failure, or having had a previous stroke. It could be caused by other, blocked arteries that lead to heart disease. Sometimes it's caused by things that we can control, like smoking, or drinking too much and sometimes it's caused by things that are totally not under our control, like getting older.

**Mrs. Williams, Patient**

Wow.

**Dr. Gillian Lautenbach, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, Penn Internal Medicine Associates**

The most important thing is, though, that I, want to check in on is how you feel managing your atrial fibrillation.

**Mrs. Williams, Patient**

Well, I feel very supported by you and the team.

**Dr. Gillian Lautenbach, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, Penn Internal Medicine Associates**

Great.

**Mrs. Williams, Patient**

And I think I'm managing pretty well. I've been taking my medications, I've adjusted my diet, and I've been doing exercises, and part of that exercise piece is chasing after my grandchildren.

**Dr. Gillian Lautenbach, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, Penn Internal Medicine Associates**

So I think you're doing a great job managing that. Taking your medicines, getting exercise, eating right and if there's anything that I or my team can do to help you learn how to manage your atrial fibrillation, reach out to us. We'll be here for you.

**Mrs. Williams, Patient**

Well, thank you. I feel really supported. So much so that I'm going to be babysitting my grandchildren for the entire weekend coming up.

**Dr. Gillian Lautenbach, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, Penn Internal Medicine Associates**

Wow. Have fun. I'm sure you're going to have a great time.

**Mrs. Williams, Patient**

Thank you. I'll let you know the next time I see you.

**Dr. Gillian Lautenbach, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, Penn Internal Medicine Associates**

Great. I look forward to seeing you next time.