

# **Managing My AFib, a Patient's Story**

## **Mrs. Williams, Patient**

As somebody with AFib, I had some concerns in the beginning, but I feel a lot better now. I feel a lot better as a result of talking to my doctor, my pharmacist, and the medical team and I learned a lot. I learned to keep track of my medications both over-the-counter and prescription.

And the way that I keep track of that is through the purchase of a pill organizer where I list all of the medications that I need to take on a daily basis.

I keep a schedule of my doctor's appointments as well as my upcoming blood tests, but one of the other things that I learned was the importance of diet.

I love to cook and bake. But I found that I need to reduce fat and salt in my intake. One of the ways that I learned to do that was to look at the plate and divide it in half with half of the plate being dedicated to vegetables and the other half divided between protein and carbohydrates.

In cooking too, I found that it was helpful to remove the salt shaker from the table and substitute it with different herbs and spices.

I also learned that I had to exercise more. I talked with my doctor about the best way to do that and I came up with walking as my exercise of choice. That was kind of difficult for me because I'd been sedentary all this time but I started out small and I also started with a partner who helped both to motivate me and encourage me.

I found that now that I'd been walking, I feel a lot better. I'm not able to run a marathon yet but I do feel a lot better.

Speaking of exercise, another important thing is to monitor your heart rate. The way to do that is to utilize your index finger, your middle finger, run a line down from your thumb and count the number of heartbeats that you receive in thirty seconds. When you get that number, you multiply it by two and that's your heart rate. You can also use a smartphone or a smartwatch or a blood pressure machine.

I showed my friends and family how to monitor my heart rate. And I also showed them to look out for signs and symptoms of stroke, because if something should happen to me, it's important for them to know what to do.

I've had a lot of support to take care of my AFib. I worked with my doctor and together we developed a plan, that included incorporating medication, changing my diet, and incorporating exercise, and as a result I feel a lot better and you can too.