

About Atrial Fibrillation

“I did a stress test, and there was an unusual activity in one of the arteries, -and subsequently I developed atrial fibrillation flutter.”

“Well six years ago I was found to be an atrial fibrillation. And at that time I was seeing a cardiologist and he did all kinds of tests and found out that my mitral valve was in pretty bad shape.”

Flutter, palpitations, unusual heartbeat.

All of these can mean atrial fibrillation.

Atrial fibrillation is a type of abnormal heartbeat.

The heart is a muscle that pumps oxygen-rich blood throughout the body. In a healthy heart, the four chambers of the heart work in rhythm together.

When you have an irregular heart rhythm it throws off the timing of the heart.

Atrial fibrillation is when your top two chambers, called the atria, beat irregularly. This makes it harder for blood to flow normally between the upper chambers and lower chambers of your heart.

Atrial fibrillation can happen without symptoms, but some general symptoms of atrial fibrillation include: fluttering or quivering heartbeat; weakness or tiredness; fainting or confusion; shortness of breath; fatigue during exercise; and sweating.

Talk to your healthcare provider about what to do if you experience symptoms of atrial fibrillation.

If you have atrial fibrillation you will work with your healthcare provider on a treatment plan.

Your treatment goals may include: rhythm control, restoring a normal rhythm to your heart; rate control, limiting overly high heart rate; managing risk factors for stroke and heart failure; and preventing other arrhythmias.

Your healthcare provider can prescribe medications to help you reach these goals.

Make sure to take your medications as prescribed.

Don't skip a dose.

And talk with your healthcare provider if you feel any side effects of medications.

They might be able to change your dosage or medication to find one that will work for you.

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Some people need more than medication to help their atrial fibrillation.

Electrical cardioversion is a procedure that can shock the heart to reset it to a normal rhythm.

An ablation is a procedure that can help if medication or cardioversion don't.

“AFib ablation is a procedure where an electrophysiologist, which is a cardiologist who specializes in heart rhythms goes in. They go into the cath lab or the EP lab and they go in through your leg, run catheters up to your heart and they try to map, they try to find where the atrial fibrillation is originating from and then they cauterize or ablate some of those cells. So, that hopefully cuts down on the atrial fibrillation.”

If you have atrial fibrillation, work with your healthcare provider to identify the best forms of treatment for you.

You can lessen your risk for further health issues and get your heart back on the correct beat.