

Atrial Fibrillation: Feeling More in Control

[Woman #1] My heartbeat just takes off.

It feels like a stampede of animals in my chest.

For a long time I didn't know what to do. How do you control a heartbeat?

I had no clue when I'd have an episode.

That really stressed me out. I was scared to do anything.

I started to feel alone and depressed. That is no way to live.

I needed to make a change.

[Man] I was so tired.

Everything was an effort.

I didn't have any energy.

I used to get together every weekend with my friends.

And I just kinda stopped doing that.

I thought I was tired because I was older. I guess my wife noticed. She set up an appointment with my doctor.

[Woman #2] One moment I felt fine.

And then I was at the hospital. With a-fib. Getting my heart shocked.

Having a-fib was like being in a really bad movie.

But a really scary movie.

Things stopped. I was thinking "what just happened?" My life was really shifting.

The big thing was ... I was afraid of having a stroke.

What would happen? Could I care for my family? What would happen to them?

[Woman #1] I talked with my doctor.

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We talked about staying calm during episodes.

And to remember that episodes always stop.

They don't last forever.

She taught me some ways to relax.

And it worked!

I had an episode while driving.

I pulled over ...

closed my eyes, and took some deep breaths.

I began to feel better.

[Man] My doctor told me that a-fib might have something to do with how I felt.

I guess I never connected the dots ... a-fib and being tired.

Knowing why I was tired made me feel better.

And then my doctor talked about little things I could try each day, like walking around the block ...

going to bed and getting up at the same time each day.

She also adjusted my medicines.

[Woman #2] I saw my doctor.

I told him how I felt.

"I'm young. I have a family. What was the best thing I could do?"

My doctor prescribed a blood thinner for me.

This medicine makes a stroke much less likely.

[Woman #1] So, I have a plan.

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And it will help me get back to living my life.

I really feel like I'm getting control.

[Man] So I have some things to try.

And just thinking about doing them makes me feel better.

I'm ready to get my life back.

[Woman #2] And now I know that I'm doing all I can to prevent a stroke.

And that really helps my fear.

I'm doing the best I can for me and my family.

And that makes me feel good.