

Atrial Fibrillation

Atrial Fibrillation can increase your risk of strokes, heart failure and other heart-related complications.

1 Introduction

Atrial fibrillation, or AFib, is an irregular and often rapid heart rate, or a condition where the atria fail to contract in a strong, rhythmic way. When in AFib, the heart may not be pumping enough oxygen-rich blood to the body.

2 Overview

During an episode of AFib, the heart's atria, or two upper chambers, beat irregularly and out of sync with the ventricles, or two lower chambers. When the heart is in AFib, blood can become static and pool inside the left atrium of the heart, leading to life-threatening complications, such as a stroke.

3 Symptoms & Cause

Some patients who have Afib do not experience any symptoms. They are usually diagnosed during a routine physical exam. However, many will experience the following symptoms:

- Palpitations (sensations or a racing, irregular heartbeat or a feeling of flip-flopping in your chest)
- Weakness

- Reduced ability to exercise
- Fatigue
- Lightheadness/Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain

Atrial Fibrillation may be occasional, persistent, or in some cases, permanent. It is believed that abnormalities or damage to the heart's structure are the most common causes of Atrial fibrillation.

4 Diagnosis & Treatment

To confirm a diagnosis of AFib, a thorough physical examination, along with medical history and an array of tests may be ordered, including:

- Electrocardiogram
- Holter monitor
- Echocardiogram
- Stress test
- X-Ray

Once AFib has been confirmed, treatment will depend on the cause, symptoms and severity of the illness. The goal of treatment is to reset the rhythm, control the heart rate, and prevent blood clots, which can lead to a stroke. In addition to medical treatment, lifestyle changes such as regular exercise, eating heart-healthy foods and quitting smoking are some of the ways that can improve the overall health of your heart.

Did you know?

Atrial Fibrillation is associated with a 5-time greater risk for stroke.

For more information on Atrial Fibrillation, please click [here](#).

References:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/atrial-fibrillation/symptoms-causes/syc-20350624#:~:text=faster%20than%20normal,-.Atrial%20fibrillation%20is%20an%20irregular%20and%20often%20rapid%20heart%20rate.to%20175%20beats%20a%20minute.>

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