

Living with Atrial Fibrillation

What is AFib?

AFib is a quivering or irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia) that can lead to blood clots, stroke, heart failure and other heart-related complications.

What are the symptoms of AFib?



Fluttering or palpitations



Rapid and irregular heartbeat



Shortness of breath



Dizziness or lightheadedness



Chest pain



Fatigue

Some people have no noticeable symptoms.



People with untreated AFib are at **5 times greater risk for stroke.**



Get regular checkups.

If you think you may have AFib, talk to your doctor. The longer AFib goes untreated, the more difficult it is to restore a normal heart rhythm.

How is AFib treated?

Medications

Doctors may prescribe anticoagulants, or “blood thinners,” such as aspirin or warfarin to reduce the risk of blood clots that can lead to a stroke. Newer anticoagulants include rivaroxaban, apixaban and dabigatran.

Other medications may be prescribed to control heart rate and rhythm.

Procedures

Several medical procedures are available to control or stop the electrical impulses that cause AFib.

- Cardioversion uses an electrical current to shock the heart back into a normal rhythm.
- AV node ablation uses heat to burn the pathway between the heart's top and bottom chambers. A pacemaker is then implanted to control the heartbeat.
- PVI ablation uses a catheter tip to destroy the heart tissue that is producing the abnormal rhythm.
- Open-heart maze procedure involves a surgeon making small cuts in the upper part of the heart and then stitching them together to form scar tissue. The scars stop the electrical impulses that may cause AFib.



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[American Heart Association – Non-Surgical Procedures for Atrial Fibrillation \(AFib or AF\)](#)
[American Heart Association – Surgical Procedures for Atrial Fibrillation \(AFib or AF\)](#)
[American Heart Association – Why Atrial Fibrillation \(AF or AFib\) Matters](#)
[Mayo Clinic – AV Node Ablation](#)
[Mayo Clinic – Pulmonary Vein Isolation](#)

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