

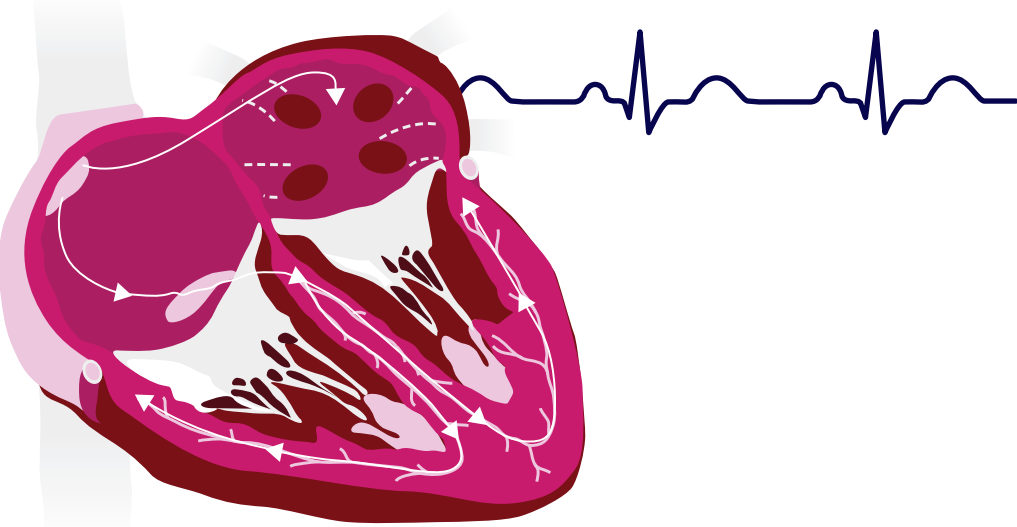
Atrial fibrillation facts

What is AF?

- Atrial fibrillation (AF or AFib) is the most common heart rhythm disorder in America.¹
- AF occurs when the upper chambers of the heart (atria) beat out of rhythm; blood is not pumped efficiently to the rest of the body, causing an unusually fast heart rate, quivering, or thumping sensations in the heart.

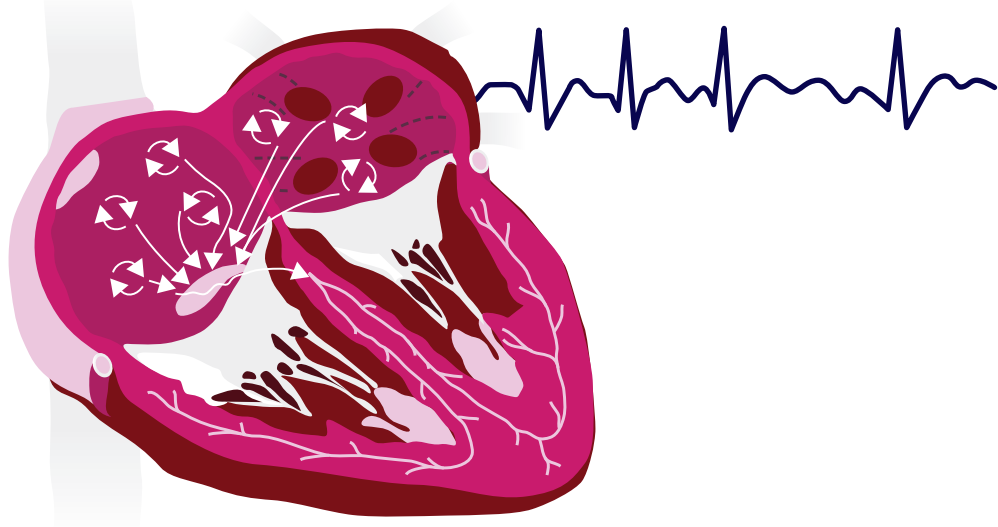
Normal heartbeat

Flow of electrical signals in a normal heartbeat.



Atrial fibrillation

Atrial fibrillation with abnormal signals originating in the atria.



Why treat AF?

If left untreated, AF may increase the risk of heart failure, stroke, and death.²⁻⁵ In fact, AF increases the likelihood of having a stroke by five times.⁴

What are the three types of AF?

If left untreated, AF as a disease continues to progress. There are three types of AF:

- **Paroxysmal (occasional)** – AF occurs from a few seconds to days, then stops on its own.
- **Persistent** – AF will last for more than seven days and will not correct on its own.
- **Permanent** – Patient and clinician joint decision to stop further attempts to restore normal heart rhythm.

What are the causes of AF?

The causes of AF are often unclear. In some cases, AF may be the result of:

- Heart abnormality from birth
- Damage to the heart structure from a heart attack
- Heart valve problem

People with otherwise normal hearts may also develop AF.

Controllable risk factors:

- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Smoking
- Excess weight
- Caffeine
- Alcohol abuse
- Lack of exercise
- Some medications
- Sleep apnea

Noncontrollable risk factors:

- Family history
- Advancing age
- Heart disorders from birth

What are the symptoms of AF?

While some people may have no symptoms and are still diagnosed with AF at a doctor's appointment, some people experience these symptoms of AF.



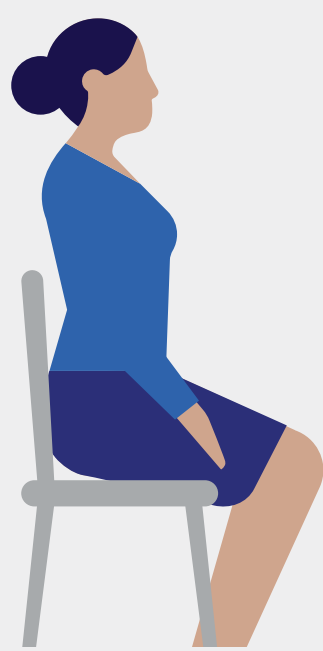
Heart sensations (or palpitations) that include an irregular, rapid, fluttering, or pounding heartbeat



Chest discomfort or pain



Dizziness



Fatigue, shortness of breath, or weakness

Goals in treating atrial fibrillation

- Relieve AF symptoms and improve patient's quality of life
- Prevent blood clots to decrease the risk of stroke
- Control the heart rate to allow the ventricles (lower heart chambers) enough time to fill with blood
- Restore the heart rhythm to allow the atria (upper heart chambers) and ventricles to work together more efficiently

Treatments for AF include:

- Medication to control the heart rate or rhythm
- Electrical cardioversion to restore normal heart rhythm
- Pacemakers and defibrillators, which may be used in conjunction with medication or catheter ablation
- Surgery to create lines of scar tissue to block abnormal electrical circuits causing AF
- Radiofrequency, cryoablation, or pulsed field ablation to help keep the heart in a normal rhythm

Ablation

There are several primary forms of ablation:

- Cryoablation freezes the tissue and disables unwanted electrical signals by creating a line of scar tissue.
- RF ablation uses heat at the tip of a catheter to disable unwanted signals through several point-by-point applications around the pulmonary vein.
- Pulsed field ablation (PFA) uses short bursts of non-thermal energy, which allows for specific areas within the heart to be treated where the unwanted electrical signals are coming from while reducing damage to other parts of the body.

Talk to your doctor

Although many patients benefit from catheter ablation, results may vary. As with any medical procedure, there are benefits and risks. Your doctor can help you decide if catheter ablation is right for you.