



Newly Diagnosed Atrial Fibrillation

What is Atrial Fibrillation (AF)?

- Atrial fibrillation is one reason why your heart might not beat regularly. It is a common heart condition, especially as you get older (1 in 10 people over age 80).
- AF can increase your chances of having a stroke.
- At first, AF may only happen once in a while, but it can gradually start to happen more often.

What are the symptoms?

Some people do not have symptoms. For those who do, this might include:

- Racing heartbeat or skipped beats.
- Feeling tired, short of breath, dizzy, weak, sweaty, or faint.
- Chest pressure or discomfort.

If you have any of these symptoms, contact your doctor or go to the emergency department.

What can cause Atrial Fibrillation?

Certain things can cause AF, such as heart and lung problems, and drinking alcohol.

Refer to the suggested tips for ways you can try to prevent AF episodes from happening.

How is Atrial Fibrillation controlled and treated?

Treatment for AF might include:

- Medication to help keep your heart beating in a regular rate and rhythm.
- Medication to prevent developing a blood clot and to reduce your risk of having a stroke (blood thinner).
- A medical procedure to get your heart beating regularly.

Your doctor will help you decide what is right for you.

MORE INFORMATION

Heart and Stroke Canada—Search “Atrial Fibrillation” <https://www.heartandstroke.ca/>

Thrombosis Canada—Patient Information Sheets: Atrial Fibrillation <https://thrombosiscanada.ca/resourcepage/patient-family-information/>



Atrial Fibrillation

SUGGESTED TIPS

Substance Use

Limit alcohol to less than 1 drink per day.

Avoid binge drinking.

If you smoke tobacco, or use cannabis, aim to stop.



Blood Pressure

Keep your blood pressure below 130/80 at rest.

Take your medications as prescribed.



Diabetes

Target your A1C to be less than 7.0% unless otherwise advised by your doctor.



Activity and Sleep



Aim for these weekly activity goals:

- Aerobic activity: 30 mins (or more)/day.
- Some type of strengthening exercise (such as light weights): 2–3 days/week.
- Stretching exercises: 10 mins/day, twice a week.

If you don't already know, ask your doctor if you have obstructive sleep apnea.

