

What is it?

Atrial fibrillation (a fib) is a heart condition that causes an irregular heart rhythm or arrhythmia at the top of the heart, called the atria. If left untreated, this irregular heart rhythm causes turbulent blood flow within the heart, where blood clots can form. These clots can then travel up to the brain, causing a stroke, or a transient ischemic attack, sometimes referred to as a mini stroke.



Stroke Prevention Clinic

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Form More Information

<https://www.heartandstroke.ca/heart-disease/conditions/atrial-fibrillation>

Cleveland Clinic. (2022, May 5). *Atrial Fibrillation (A fib)*. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/16765-atrial-fibrillation-afib>



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Atrial Fibrillation

Stroke Prevention Clinic

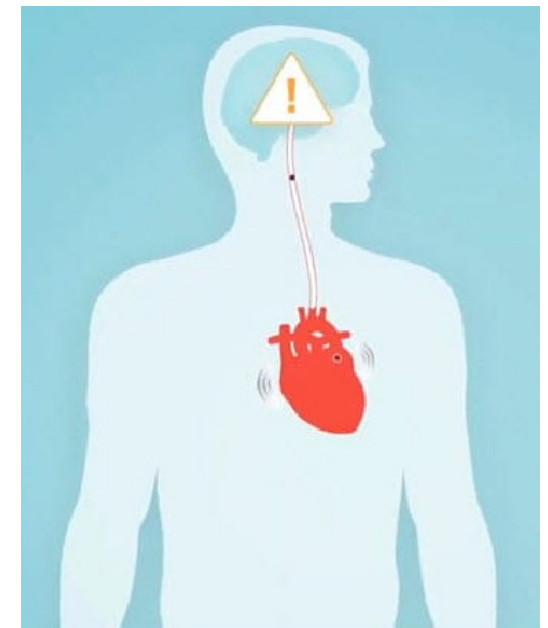


Image: <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/atrial-fibrillation/what-is-atrial-fibrillation-afib-or-af>



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Symptoms

Some experience no symptoms with atrial fibrillation while others may experience:

- Heart palpitations
- Sweating
- Fatigue
- Lightheadedness or dizziness

Causes

The risk of having atrial fibrillation increases with age, and the following risk factors:

- High blood pressure
- Smoking
- Moderate to heavy alcohol use
- Obesity
- Sleep apnea
- Diabetes

If at any time you are concerned about your symptoms, or they are unusual for you, please seek medical attention.

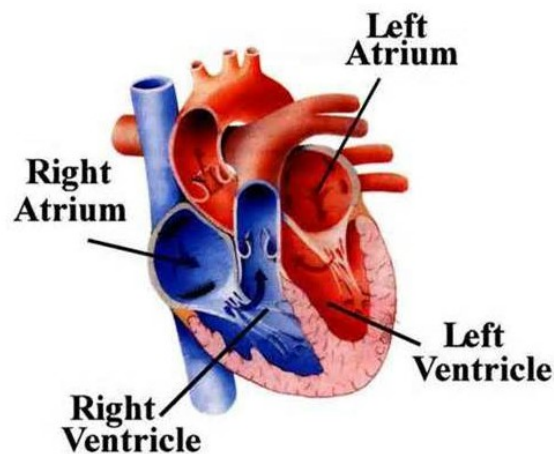
Diagnosis

Diagnosis is based off of your medical history, physical examination and some of the following tests:

- Echocardiogram
- Holter Monitor
- ECG

Due to there being different types of atrial fibrillation, sometimes a repeated Holter monitor may be required to diagnose it. The different types of atrial fibrillation include:

- **Paroxysmal:** temporary episodes that come and go without intervention.
- **Persistent:** episodes lasting longer than 7 days , usually requiring treatment.
- **Permanent:** lasting longer than 1 year despite medical treatment.



scienceeasylearning.wordpress.com

Image: <https://socratic.org/questions/what-are-the-4-chambers-of-the-heart>

Treatment

Treatment is based on the symptoms that you are experiencing and your risks. Treatment may involve starting a blood thinner, and a prescription for rate and/or rhythm control may also be prescribed. Some medications commonly prescribed for atrial fibrillation include:

- **Blood thinners:** an anticoagulant like warfarin, rivaroxaban (example— Xarelto®) is prescribed to help prevent blood clots from forming
- **Heart rate control:** medications such as atenolol, or metoprolol can help control heart rate.
- **Rhythm control:** Digoxin can help maintain a regular normal heart rhythm.

Many people diagnosed with atrial fibrillation continue to live a healthy, normal life. It is important to continue to maintain a healthy lifestyle by:

- Managing high blood pressure
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Be smoke-free
- Exercise—30 minutes per day
- Eat a healthy diet full of fruits, vegetables, white meat/fish.
- Consume alcohol in moderation
- Manage stress

The Saskatchewan Health Authority works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Saskatchewan as the traditional territory of First Nations and Métis People.