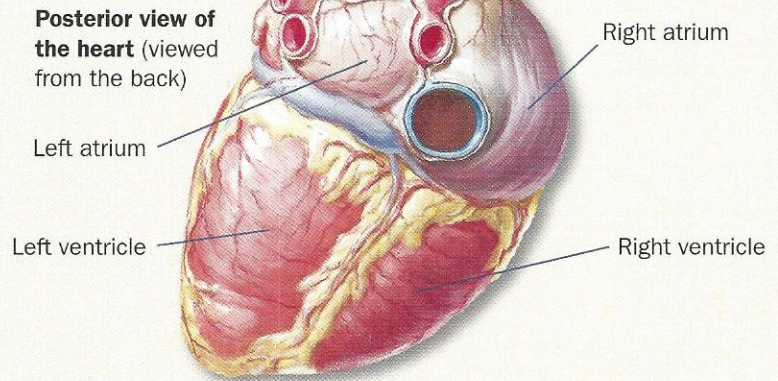


UNDERSTANDING YOUR ATRIAL FIBRILLATION (AFib)

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What Is Atrial Fibrillation (AFib)?

The speed and pattern of your heartbeat is called your heart rhythm and can be felt by feeling the pulse. Your heart rhythm is set by signals from the heart's electrical system. An abnormal heart rhythm is called an *arrhythmia*. Atrial fibrillation (AFib) is one type of abnormal rhythm. The muscle looks as if it is wiggling instead of squeezing (contracting).



In atrial fibrillation (AFib), muscles in the wall of the upper heart chambers (left and right atrium) twitch abnormally. This causes the ventricles to work harder to get blood to the body, and heart failure may result.

What Causes Atrial Fibrillation (AFib)?

Among the many causes, the most common is aging. Others are heart problems such as:

- hypertension (high blood pressure)
- congestive heart failure (CHF)
- mitral valve disease (mitral stenosis)

Lung diseases, other illnesses (e.g., diabetes), and overactive thyroid are more causes. Caffeine, nicotine (cigarettes), and too much alcohol can cause it or make it worse.

What Are the Symptoms of Atrial Fibrillation (AFib)?

Many people have atrial fibrillation (AFib) and never feel it. Symptoms often include:

- A "fluttering" feeling in your chest
- Chest pain or pressure
- Feeling out of breath
- Feeling weak or tired
- Dizziness or fainting
- Feeling lightheaded

NOTES:

DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Atrial Fibrillation (AFib):

- ✓ **DO** eat a heart-healthy diet (less fat and cholesterol).
- ✓ **DO** keep to an ideal body weight.
- ✓ **DO** reduce stress.
- ✓ **DO** exercise as much as you can if you are taking the proper drugs and have no symptoms.
- ✓ **DO** take your medicines as prescribed. Have blood drug levels checked.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you have drug side effects or if you have new or worsening symptoms (dizziness, chest pain or tightness, fainting, shortness of breath).
- ⊗ **DON'T** do activities that cause bruising if you are taking a blood thinner.
- ⊗ **DON'T** use tobacco.
- ⊗ **DON'T** drink too much alcohol or caffeine.



Eat a healthful diet.



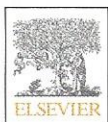
Exercise and maintain a healthy weight.



Stop smoking.

Chest pain or signs of stroke must be checked immediately.

Be sure to tell your doctor if you have any of these symptoms, or if symptoms are happening more often or lasting longer.



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