

Atrial Fibrillation Fact Sheet

Atrial Fibrillation (AFib) is a condition in which the upper chambers of the heart (the atria) beat in an uncoordinated and disorganized fashion, resulting in a rapid and irregular rhythm.¹ There are three different, but not mutually exclusive, types of AFib:²

- **Paroxysmal AFib** — Episodes of AFib may come and go with symptoms that last from 30 seconds to hours before the heart returns to a normal rhythm on its own.
- **Persistent AFib** — Over time, AFib episodes may last longer and become more persistent, requiring medication or electrical treatment (i.e., cardioversion) to return the heart to its normal rhythm.
- **Permanent AFib** — This type of AFib is not generally responsive to treatment and may require more extensive medication intervention in order to restore the heart to normal rhythm, which in many cases is not possible.

How many people have AFib?

There are approximately 2.5 million Americans living with AFib.³ As the number of elderly people increase, this number is expected to grow to 5.6 million in the US by the year 2050, with more than 50 percent of affected individuals older than 80 years of age.⁴

What raises my chance of developing AFib?

Risk factors for developing AFib include:^{5,6,7}

Age	Heart valve disease	Obesity	Heart failure
High blood pressure	Coronary artery disease	Diabetes	Family history

What are typical symptoms of AFib?

Many people with AFib do not have any symptoms.⁸ However, others may experience mild to severe symptoms including:

Fatigue	Shortness of breath
Feelings of overall weakness	Dizziness
Rapid and irregular heart beat	Chest pain

Are there any triggers that may bring on an AFib episode?

AFib triggers are different for every patient. However, common triggers often include:⁵

Alcohol	Stress
Smoking	Intense exercise

What are potential consequences of AFib?

Stroke: Because your heartbeat is out of rhythm, blood can pool in your atria. Blood clots can form and travel to the brain causing stroke. AFib is associated with a five-fold increase in risk for stroke.⁹

Mortality: AFib doubles the risk of all-cause mortality.¹⁰

More severe outcomes of comorbidities: AFib worsens underlying cardiovascular disease,⁵ and is associated with other health conditions, including sleep apnea, congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease, diabetes and hypertension.^{10,11}

Health services utilization: Patients with AFib tend to have frequent doctor visits, have an increased risk of hospitalization, and also have longer and repeated hospital stays.^{12,13}

Quality of life: Patients with AFib have been found to have significantly reduced quality of life relative to the general population — socially, physically and emotionally.¹⁴

Why is AFib important to treat?

AFib is a progressive disease and can become permanent if not treated early. Furthermore, AFib can change the shape and size of your heart through a process called remodeling, so it is important to begin a treatment plan as early as possible. The treatment of atrial fibrillation has three common goals:⁵

- Restoration and maintenance of sinus rhythm
- Controlling the heart rate
- Preventing stroke

If you have been diagnosed with AFib, keep talking to your doctor to make sure you are doing everything you can to help manage the disease. In the meantime, visit www.AFStat.com to learn more about AFib and to see how you can join efforts to raise awareness of the disease.

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