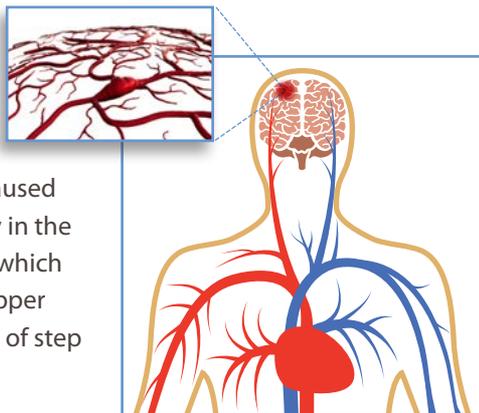


## Atrial Fibrillation

The heart's job is to pump blood around the body. Normally, it does so with a squeezing action which we call our heartbeat, and beats in a steady, regular rhythm.

### What is Atrial Fibrillation?

Atrial fibrillation (AFib) is a condition that causes the heart to beat irregularly. This is caused by disorganized electrical activity in the top chambers (part) of the heart which are called the atria. In AFib, the upper chambers beat too quickly or out of step with the lower chambers.



In AFib, irregular blood flow can allow blood to pool and form a clot in the heart. The clot can then be pumped out of the heart and travel to the brain, which can cause a blockage, leading to a stroke or TIA.

**Having AFib greatly increases your risk of a stroke, which means following your doctor's advice to reduce your risk of a stroke is very important.**

A person with atrial fibrillation may not feel the irregular heart beat or experience any symptoms; however it is still serious since it increases the risk of stroke.

### How is Atrial Fibrillation diagnosed and treated?

Atrial Fibrillation is a rhythm that can come and go. You may have one or more of the following tests to look for this rhythm:

- Electrocardiogram ECG (A short recording)
- Holter Monitor ( 72 hours and 14 day recording device)

### Treatment

Blood thinners (anticoagulation medications) are used to prevent blood clots from forming when you are in AFib (see page 16) . The type of blood thinner depends on your medical conditions or stroke risk factors. Please speak to your health care provider about what is the best choice of medication for you.

It is recommended that you **wear a medical alert bracelet or necklace** to notify medical providers that you have AFib and you are taking anticoagulation medication in cases of emergency.



<http://www.ccs.ca/en/resources/patient-education>

