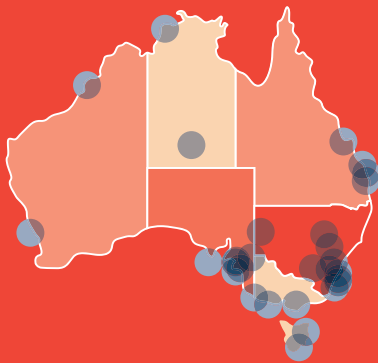
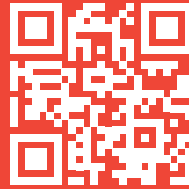


Atrial fibrillation & your heart health

Please scan the QR code to visit Heart Support Australia's website for additional information and access our online resources to further support your journey.



Being part of Heart Support Australia and sharing your lived experience benefits your heart health in many ways.

A: Level 3/50 Launceston St, Phillip
ACT 2606, Australia

E: office@heartnet.org.au

P: 02 6253 0097

W: heartsupport.org.au

 @heartsupportaustralia

 @heartsupportaus

 @heart-support-australia

Heart Support Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters, and community. We pay our respect to them and their cultures, and Elders past, present and future.

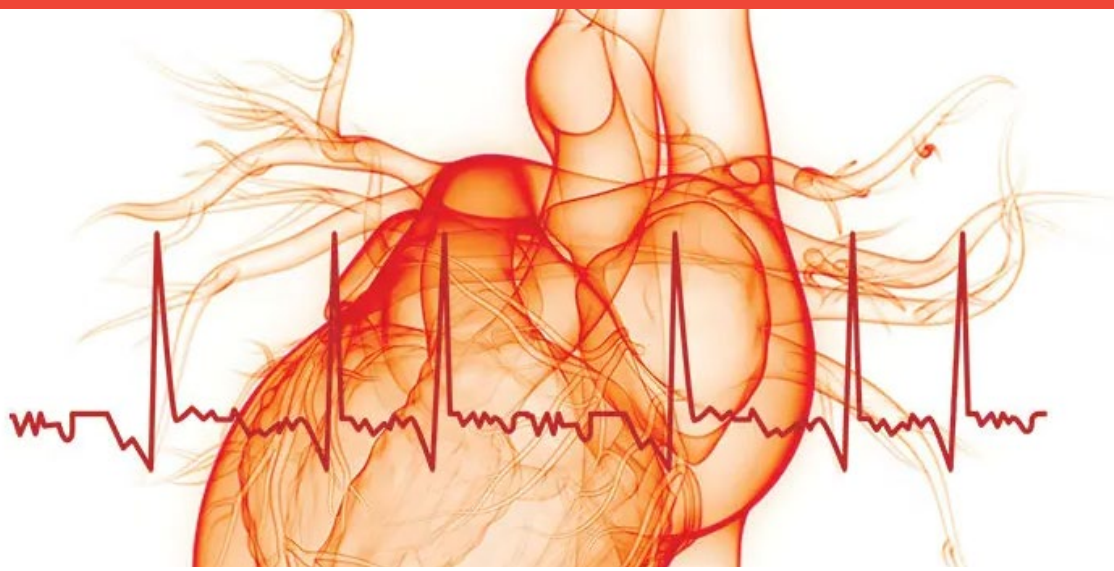


**KNOW YOUR NUMBERS
TREAT YOUR RISK**

Help reduce the chances of a secondary heart event by knowing your numbers. Visit www.knowyournumberstreatyourrisk.com.au

1. Le Grande MR, Salvacion M, Shwaita L, Murphy BM, Jackson AC and Alvarenga ME (2024) Does coping style mediate the relationship between knowledge and psychosocial outcomes in women with atrial fibrillation? *Front. Psychiatry* 15:1328111. doi: 10.3389/fpsy.2024.1328111

2. Rakhshan M, Najafi H, Valizadeh GA. Lifestyle of Patients with Atrial Fibrillation Following Self-Management Interventions: a Randomized Clinical Trial. *J Caring Sci.* 2019 Jun 18(2):83-88. doi: 10.15171/jcs.2019012. PMID: 31249817; PMCID: PMC6589479.

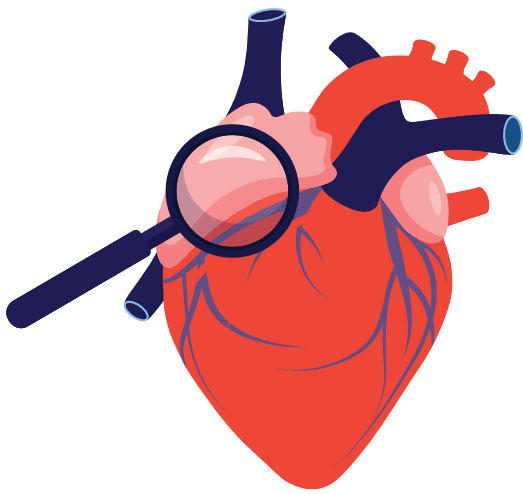


What is Atrial Fibrillation?

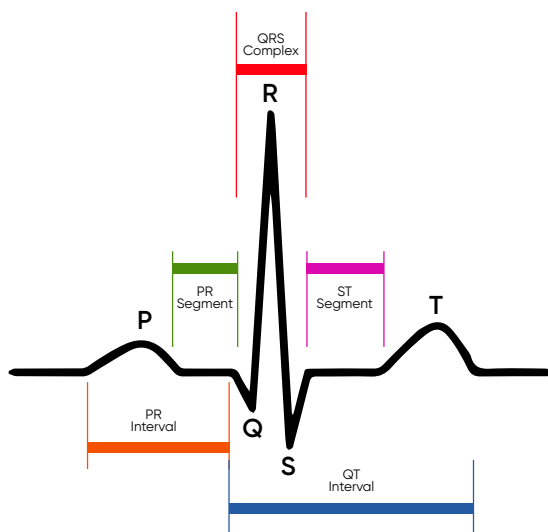
Atrial fibrillation (AF) is the most common disturbance of the electrical system of the heart.

A special electrical system in your heart controls your heartbeat and heart rhythm. The normal heartbeat is regular and between 60 – 100 beats per minute. Problems with the electrical system of the heart can affect the rate and/or the rhythm of the heart. When the rhythm is not regular, and the rate is too high or too low, this affects the ability of the heart muscle to pump.

Normal heart rhythm is known as 'sinus rhythm'. It is controlled by the sinus node.



What you need to know



The top chamber (right atrium) of the heart sends an electrical message from the sinoatrial (SA) node [P] for the atria to contract and pump blood to the right ventricle. The signal travels via the atrioventricular (AV) node [QRS] and causes the ventricles to contract. The heart rests [T] and then the next electrical impulse comes and the cycle repeats.

Why is it important to manage Atrial Fibrillation?

Left untreated, AF can result in stroke and heart failure. If symptoms of palpitations, dizziness, shortness of breath, fatigue, or exercise intolerance are severe.

Discussing Atrial Fibrillation with Your Health Professional

An AF diagnosis may be frightening, but it is a condition that is reversible and can be managed and treated effectively with medication and risk factor management, which can allow you to lead a long and active life.

Understanding your atrial fibrillation treatments

- How long will I need to take the medication?
- Are there foods that will interact with my medication?
- How does the ablation procedure work?
- How does the medication work?
- When I have an AF episode do I need to go to hospital or follow an action plan?

Understanding your atrial fibrillation

- What is Atrial Fibrillation?
- Why do you have Atrial Fibrillation?
- When should you seek help? What can you do to help?

Understanding lifestyle factors

- What diet and lifestyle factors will improve my atrial fibrillation?
- How does atrial fibrillation impact my emotional wellbeing?
- Who is qualified to help me?
- Can I exercise?



Stop smoking



Maintain a healthy weight



Exercise daily



Establish healthy eating



Manage stress

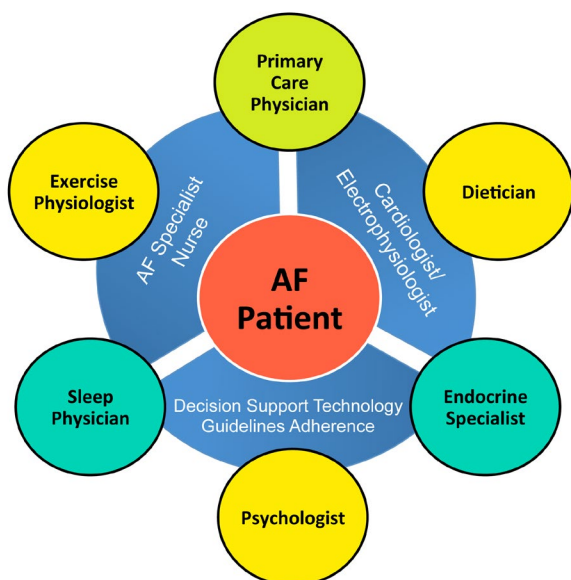


Manage sleep apnoea



Lessen alcohol intake

Multidisciplinary care is best



- Those who lost more than 10% of their initial body weight.
- Exercised aerobically for 30 minutes daily.
- Identified and treated sleep apnea with CPAP therapy.
- Treated blood pressure to achieve a target BP of less than 130/80.
- Controlled and monitored blood sugar levels through lifestyle changes.
- Reduced weekly alcohol consumption to less than 3 drinks per week.
- Had improvements in symptoms and severity of atrial fibrillation.



What you need to know

The treatment of AF varies from patient to patient as it depends on a wide range of individual circumstances.

The aim to restore normal rhythm is not always possible.



Thinning the blood

Anticoagulation treatment is given in conjunction with rate or rhythm control therapies. Having atrial fibrillation increases your risk of having a stroke.

Management of cardiac risk factors is key, including:

- Healthy eating
- Exercise and physical activity
- Reducing alcohol
- Treating sleep apnoea
- Lowering blood pressure
- Controlling sugar levels

Two treatment strategies are:

- Control heart rate
- Control heart rhythm

Rate control

Rate control refers to the treatment to manage the heart rate of the patient to ensure that heart rates are within normal limits (60–100 beats per minute).

Rhythm control

Rhythm control refers to the treatment to manage the arrhythmia by restoring normal rhythm (sinus rhythm).

Rhythm control can be achieved by prescribing Antiarrhythmic drugs or Procedures such as:

- Cardioversion
- Catheter ablation
- Pulmonary vein isolation

