

Care Gram

Atrial Fibrillation

What Is Atrial Fibrillation (AFib)?

Normally, electrical impulses in your heart squeeze and relax to pump blood at a regular beat. When you have atrial fibrillation (AF or AFib), the upper chambers do not beat correctly. Instead of regular beats, your heart beats too fast or quivers like a bowl of gelatin. This can cause a lack of oxygen to your body, causing you to feel weak, dizzy, and faint.

AFib increases your risk for stroke. Treatment is needed to control the heart rate and help relieve the symptoms.

AFib can cause you to feel:

- Fast thumping inside the chest
- Short of breath
- Lightheaded or dizzy
- Like you are going to pass out
- Tired or weak
- Chest pain

To find out if you have AFib, your doctor may listen to your heartbeat. He or she also may order tests that record your heartbeat or take special pictures of your heart.

How Is AFib Treated?

1. Your doctor may order medicine to reduce your heartbeat and rate.
2. Blood thinners may be ordered to reduce your risk for stroke.
3. Electric shock may be used to return your heartbeat to normal.

If you need help paying for your medicines, please contact Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Pharmacy at (220) 564-4628. We have a Prescription Assistance Program at LMH.

Call your doctor if you:

- Feel lightheaded, dizzy, or faint
- Have skipped heartbeats
- Have a “fluttering” or pounding feeling in the chest
- Have chest pain or pressure
- Cannot catch your breath
- Feel tired

If you cannot reach your doctor, go to the Emergency Department right away.

This Care Gram is for information purposes only. It may become out-of-date over time. Ask a doctor or a healthcare professional about your specific condition.



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