Mended Hearts®

# AFIB AND STROKE

## UNDERSTANDING ATRIAL FIBRILLATION (AFIB)

As someone diagnosed with Afib, it's important to understand not only your condition, but also the associated risks. This handout has been designed to help you:

- Understand what Afib is
- Learn about the associated increased risk of stroke with Afib
- Make medication treatment options with your healthcare professional
- Discuss Afib with your family and friends

**What is Afib and how does it relate to stroke?**

Afib is a type of irregular heartbeat. It is caused when the two upper chambers of the heart (atria) beat unpredictably and sometimes rapidly.

**Who is most likely to have Afib?**

You are not alone. An estimated 2.2 million people are diagnosed with Afib. While it can occur at any age, Afib is more common in older people. About 5 percent of people 65 years and older and one in every 10 people over 80 have Afib. Afib is more common in people with high blood pressure, heart disease or lung disease.



**What are the symptoms?**

Often, Afib has no visible symptoms. Some people with Afib describe fluttering, racing or pounding sensations in their chests. Others may experience episodes of dizziness, fainting or lightheadedness. Anyone with these symptoms should visit a healthcare professional to be evaluated for Afib.

## UNDERSTANDING A STROKE

A stroke is a brain attack that occurs when a blood clot blocks an artery or a blood vessel breaks, interrupting blood flow to an area of the brain. Brain cells begin to die.

When you have Afib, blood pools in the atria of the heart and clots may form [Figure 1]. These clots may then be carried to the brain, causing a stroke [Figures 2-3]. With proper preventive treatment, stroke may be avoided.

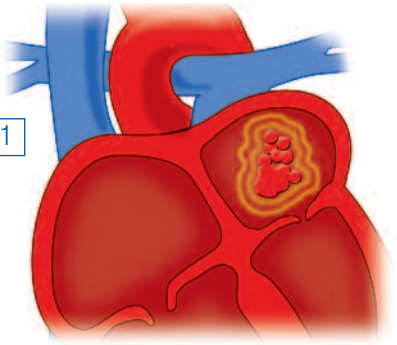


Figure 1

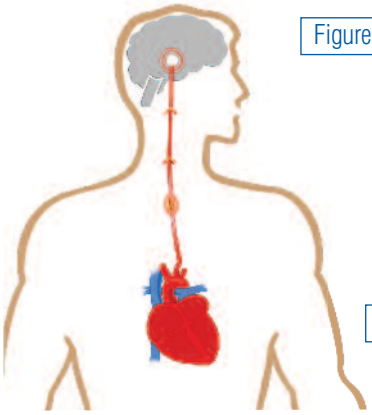


Figure 2

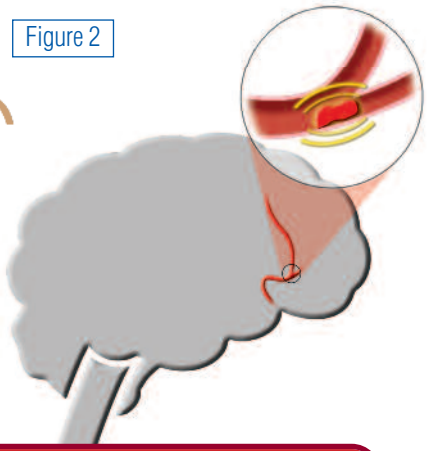


Figure 3

**PEOPLE WITH AFIB ARE FIVE TIMES MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A STROKE.**

**Afib-related stroke**

Afib is a major risk factor for stroke. A person with Afib is five times more likely than a person without Afib to have a stroke. However, people who have been diagnosed with Afib have already taken the first step to prevent an Afib-related stroke. Sixty to 80 percent of strokes in people with Afib can be prevented. Therefore, it is important to understand stroke symptoms, what to do if you have stroke symptoms and available treatments to control Afib.

Source: National Stroke Association
www.stroke.org/afib-stroke

Spirit Health Group®

National STROKE Association®

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## MY MEDICATIONS

| Medication Name | Dosage |
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## MY HEALTHCARE TEAM

| Name | Phone Number |
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Questions for my next visit

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