

# ATRIAL FIBRILLATION (AF)



**AF EFFECTS 2% OF THE  
GENERAL POPULATION**

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## Signs and Symptoms

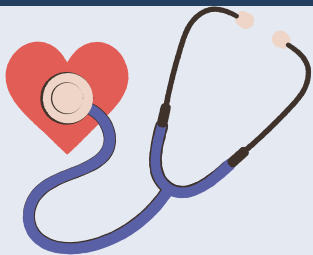
1. You may experience palpitations
2. You may feel irregular 'fluttering' of the heart
3. Some people feel they have an irregular pulse
4. AF may also cause feelings of fatigue, weakness, difficulty exercising, discomfort or dizziness
5. Some people with AF may not experience symptoms however, it is still important to treat the condition

# What is atrial fibrillation (AF)

AF is a common and serious disturbance of the electrical system of the heart. It is one of a number of conditions commonly referred to as 'arrhythmias' or 'dysrhythmias', where the heart beats with an abnormal rhythm.

If not recognised and correctly treated, AF can result in significant problems, including stroke and heart failure.

AF occurs when there are abnormal electrical impulses in the atria. In AF, 'waves' of uncontrolled electrical signals travel through the atria, rather than the normal, highly regulated signals from the sinoatrial node.



## Treatments

The best treatment for AF depends on a number of factors including:



- the severity of symptoms
- the cause (if known) and duration of AF
- the person's overall risk

### Those treatments include:

**1-Cardioversion** - restoring normal rhythm

**2-Long term medications**



**3-Ablation procedures**

**4-In some cases a pacemaker is implanted**

**5- Lifestyle changes including weight loss**

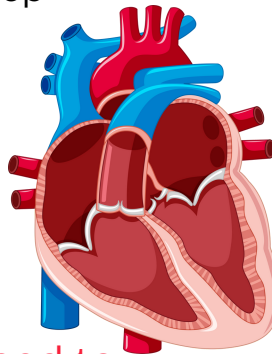
**6- Management of other health conditions such as heart failure, high blood pressure, diabetes**



## AF Triggers

People who have paroxysmal atrial fibrillation may find there are certain things that trigger an atrial fibrillation episode, such as:

- Alcohol
- Stress and anxiety
- Caffeine
- Exercise
- Fatigue and lack of sleep
- Infection
- Certain medications
- Smoking
- Dehydration



For more information head to [heartfoundation.org.au](http://heartfoundation.org.au)

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