

What is Atrial Fibrillation?

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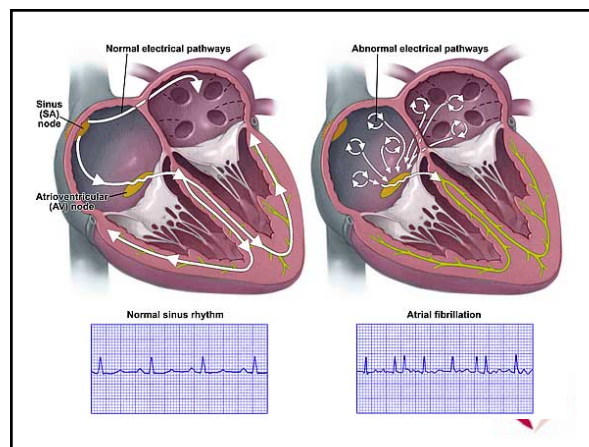
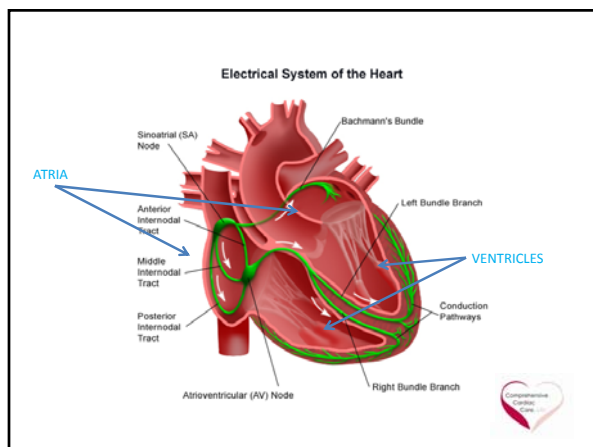
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Atrial Fibrillation

- Chaotic Rhythm coming from the atria (top part of your heart)
 - There are 4 chambers in your heart
 - Right and Left Atria (top chambers)
 - Right and Left Ventricles (bottom chambers)



Atrial Fibrillation

- Most common cardiac arrhythmia
 - Becomes more frequent with age
 - Almost 10% of people will have it by the time they turn 80
- About 2.2 million people in the US have atrial fibrillation



Atrial Fibrillation

- One time occurrence
- Come and go within seconds
- Come and go within hours
- Lasts for days
- Permanent



Symptoms of Atrial Fibrillation

- Feeling your heart beat too fast or irregularly
- Feeling your heart beat too slow
- Fatigue
- Shortness of Breath
- Lightheadedness or passing out (fainting)
- Chest Discomfort
- Swelling in your feet and ankles
- Some people have NO symptoms at all!



Causes of Atrial Fibrillation

- Age
- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Thyroid Disease
- Cardiac Disease
- Valvular Heart Disease
- Lung disease
- Acute illness



Risks of Atrial Fibrillation

- #1 concern is that it significantly increases the risk of stroke
 - Increases the risk by 7-8 fold over normals
- Can cause heart failure
- Can cause people to pass out
- But remember- some people have no symptoms, they are just at risk for a stroke



Treatment of Atrial Fibrillation

- Because strokes are the most feared consequence of atrial fibrillation, it is recommended that patients are protected
- Anticoagulation- Blood Thinners
 - Coumadin (Warfarin)
 - Aspirin
 - Discuss with your doctor what is better for you



Treatment of Atrial Fibrillation

- Medications to slow down the heart rate
- Medications to keep the rhythm
- Electrical cardioversion
- Pacemaker to help with slow heart rhythms
- Ablation to fix the rhythm
- Treatment depends on what kind of atrial fibrillation and other medical problems



Questions?

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