Atrial Fibrillation and Stroke Prevention

Atrial fibrillation (AF) is a condition where the heartbeat is irregular and often very fast. Untreated, AF is a major risk factor for stroke. Stroke is one of the leading causes of death and disability worldwide. Most strokes, including those caused by AF can be prevented.

33.5m people in the world with AF

Symptoms

Most people with AF don't have any symptoms

General fatigue

Rapid and/ or irregular heartbeat

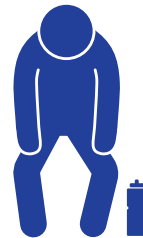Fluttering or "thumping" in the chest

Dizziness or light-headedness

Shortness of breath and anxiety
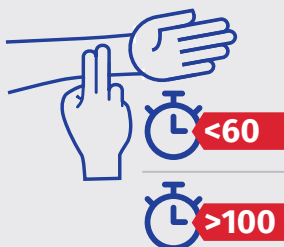
Weakness

Faintness or confusion

Fatigue when exercising

1million
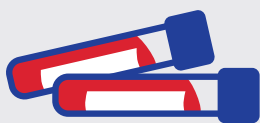The number of AF related strokes in the world per year.

5x
People with AF are five times more likely to have a stroke than the rest of the population.
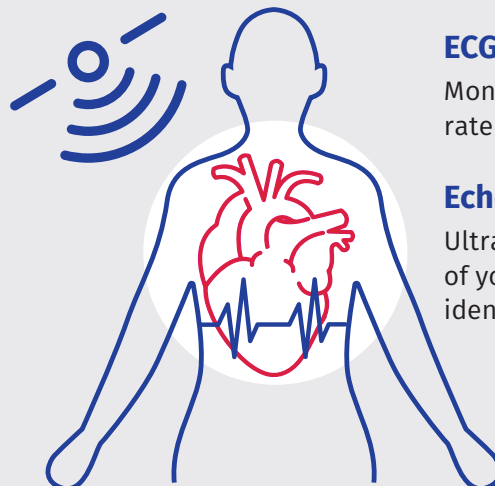
Diagnosing AF

Pulse check
If your pulse rate is consistently lower than 60 or higher than 100 speak to your doctor.

<60
>100

Blood test
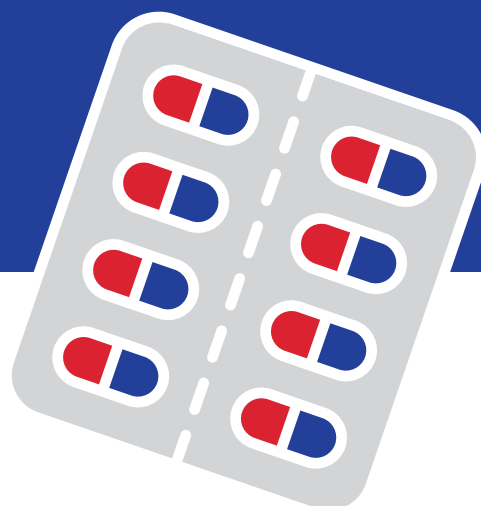Some AF is caused by another health condition, a blood test will check for this.

ECG
Monitors your heart rate and rhythm.

Echocardiogram
Ultrasound imaging of your heart to identify any defects.

AF Treatment

Your doctor can prescribe medication to:

1. Address any underlying health condition causing AF

2. Control your heart rate

3. Restore your heart rhythm
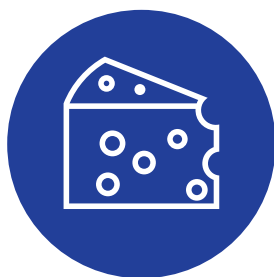
4. Prevent blood clots

Anticoagulants stop blood from clotting. There are several different types of anticoagulants that your doctor may prescribe. Newer drugs have fewer side effects, cause fewer problems when taken alongside other medications and might be better at reducing your stroke risk.

Preventing AF and Stroke

We can all take steps to reduce our risk of AF. Action can also help you to avoid some other risk factors for stroke and heart disease.

Manage your weight

Reduce the fat in your diet

Reduce alcohol consumption

Avoid stimulants

This information was developed by:

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WORLD HEART FEDERATION

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