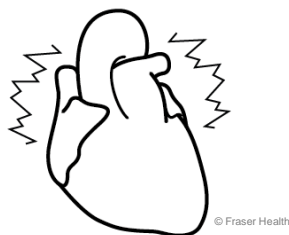


Emergency Services

Atrial Fibrillation

Atrial Fibrillation (or A-Fib) is a common heart rhythm problem. The electrical signals that control the heartbeat become irregular and cause the upper part of the heart to quiver (fibrillate). When this happens, the heart can't pump well.



A-Fib is not life threatening, but needs treatment to prevent complications. When blood is not flowing properly through the heart, it can clot. If a clot travels to the brain, it can cause a stroke.

Common Treatments

- **Heart Medications** control the speed or rhythm of the heartbeat.
- **Blood Thinners** taken every day to prevent clots. Some people need regular blood tests to check their blood clotting. The doctor or pharmacist checks the results and tells the person if they need to adjust the dose.
- **Pacemaker** is implanted in the body to control the heartbeat with electrical signals. Used along with medications.
- **Cardioversion or Ablation** uses a mild electrical current or a temperature change to scar or destroy the heart cells allowing the incorrect electrical signals.

What to do for your health

- Be active and eat well
- If you smoke, the best thing you can do for your health is to stop. If you want help to quit, visit www.quit.now.ca or call 1-877-455-2233.
- Know what your medications are for and how to take them. Always check with your doctor before stopping any medications.
- Visit your family doctor 1 week after leaving the hospital. Ask your doctor if you need to see a heart doctor (cardiologist) for your health.

When to get help

Call **9-1-1** or visit the nearest **emergency department** if you:

- feel dizzy, lightheaded or weak
- feel pain, pressure or discomfort in your chest
- have a hard time breathing
- have signs of a stroke

Watch for signs of a stroke. Think **FAST**.

Face	Is it drooping?
Arms	Can you raise both arms?
Speech	Is it slurred or jumbled?
Time	Call 9-1-1 right away.

Resources for Atrial Fibrillation

Fraser Health Supported Programs

- Get up and Go Classes
(small fee, 50+ years)
Offered at local community centres
604-587-7866

Web and Community Resources

- www.HealthLinkBC.ca 8-1-1
Information online or speak to a registered nurse, pharmacist, or dietitian anytime of the day or night.
- Chronic Disease Self-Management
www.selfmanagement.ca 604-940-1273
- Heart and Stroke Foundation
www.heartandstroke.bc.ca 778-372-8000
- Institute for Health + Lung Health
heartandlung.ca
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