

Discharge Instructions for Atrial Fibrillation

You have been diagnosed with atrial fibrillation. Your heart's two upper chambers quiver rather than beat. Atrial fibrillation is serious since it reduces the heart's ability to fill with blood as it should. Blood clots may form; this increases the risk of stroke. Atrial fibrillation can be treated. With close monitoring, most patients with atrial fibrillation lead normal lives.

Home Care

- Take your medication exactly as directed. Don't skip doses.
- Work with your doctor to determine the proper medications and doses.
- Learn to take your own pulse. Keep a record of your results. Ask your doctor which pulse rates mean that you need medical attention. Slowing your pulse is often the goal of treatment.
- Limit your intake of coffee, tea, cola, and other beverages with caffeine to 2 per day. Eliminate caffeine completely if you can.
- Avoid over-the-counter medications that contain caffeine.
- Tell your doctor if you take antacids. They interfere with some medications given for atrial fibrillation.
- Drink no more than 2 alcoholic beverages a day.
- Never take stimulants such as amphetamines or cocaine. These drugs can speed your heart rate and trigger atrial fibrillation.

Follow-Up

Make a follow-up appointment as directed by our staff.

When to Call Your Doctor

Call your doctor immediately if you have any of the following:

- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Fainting
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain with increased activity

- Irregular heartbeat or fast pulse