

Navigating Your Treatment Strategies



UpBeat
By Heart Rhythm Society

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TREATMENT STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING MY ATRIAL FIBRILLATION (AFIB)

Every patient is different, but there are four main strategies for managing AFib. You may hear your doctor call these the **“Four Pillars of AFib Care.”** Depending on your needs, your doctors may recommend one or more of these strategies.

FOUR PILLARS OF AF MANAGEMENT

RATE CONTROL

MANAGING OR PREVENTING YOUR HEART FROM BEATING TOO FAST

Lowering your heart rate is an important part of treating AFib.

Your doctors may prescribe rate control medications. You may hear your doctors talking about these medications, called “beta blockers” or “calcium channel-blockers. Your doctors may suggest this type of drug based on your medical history, how well the drug may work for you, and its side effects.

RHYTHM CONTROL

RETURNING TO AND MAINTAINING A NORMAL RHYTHM IN YOUR HEART

People living with AFib may have an irregular heartbeat that feels like a fluttering in their chest, or a strong pulsation in their chest or throat. These are called palpitations.

Your doctors use special medications or procedures to return your heart to a regular heartbeat (normal rhythm).

Learn more about rhythm control here: <https://upbeat.org/patient-videos>

STROKE PREVENTION

PREVENTING BLOOD CLOTS FROM FORMING

Atrial fibrillation can cause a 5x greater risk of stroke.

Your doctors may prescribe medications called “blood thinners” or anticoagulants to keep blood clots from forming or getting bigger. This is important because travelling blood clots can cause a heart attack or stroke. Talk to your doctor to see if these medications are right for you.

Learn more about stroke prevention here: <https://upbeat.org/documents/AFib-StrokePrevention/download>

RISK FACTOR MANAGEMENT

FOCUSING ON LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Some medical conditions that increase your risk are diabetes, obesity, sleep apnea and high blood pressure. Some lifestyle choices adding to the risk are habits like smoking, lack of physical activity, and misuse of drugs and alcohol.

Your multidisciplinary care team will work with you to figure out your particular risk factors and create a plan on how to address them.

Learn more about risk factor management here: <https://upbeat.org/patient-information-sheets>