



American Heart Association.

EmPOWERED to Serve™

# Learn AFib By Heart

#EmPOWERChange



# LEARN AFIB BY HEART | LESSON OVERVIEW

## Welcome

- What is EmPOWERED to Serve?
- Program Topic and Urgent Community Need

## Health Lesson: Understanding Atrial Fibrillation (AFib)

- Learn the signs of AFib
- Know how you can reduce stroke risk

## Closing Thoughts

- Create A Culture Of Health
- Online Resources



# WHAT IS EMPOWERED TO SERVE?

**EmPOWERED to Serve** is a movement inspiring those who are passionate about driving change through health justice in their communities.

We are catalysts for change, empowering the equity equation.



**AHA's Mission Statement:**  
To be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives.



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# ETS HEALTH CHECK: KNOWING YOUR HEALTH HISTORY

## Blood pressure and weight check

- Use these as a starting point for you
- Optional and anonymous

## Why check blood pressure?

- High blood pressure (HBP) is a risk factor for heart disease, the No. 1 killer worldwide.
- HBP is also a risk factor for stroke, the No. 2 killer worldwide.

## Why measure weight?

- Over 70 percent of U.S. adults are overweight or obese.
- Being obese puts you at higher risk for heart disease, stroke, HBP, diabetes and more.



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# PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, you'll be able to:

- Define AFib and know the symptoms of atrial fibrillation.
- Talk to your health care professional and learn how AFib can increase stroke risk.
- Understand healthy living with AFib.
- Learn the signs of atrial fibrillation (AFib).
- Know how you can act and adapt to reduce stroke risk.



# WHAT IS ATRIAL FIBRILLATION (ALSO KNOWN AS AFIB OR AF)?

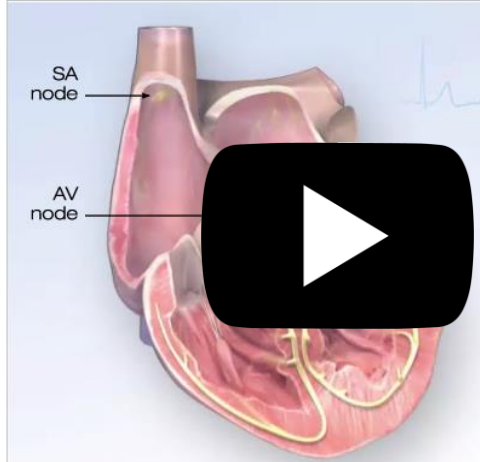
**AFib is the most common type of treated irregular heartbeat or arrhythmia.**

Instead of beating in a normal pattern, the upper heart valves “quiver” or “flutter.”

- They beat irregularly and too fast.
- Blood flow slows, which can cause blood clots.
- As a result, the risk for stroke is five times higher.

Atrial Fibrillation Atrial Fibrillation [Bookmark and Share](#)

**Atrial Fibrillation**  
(also called AFib or AF) is a quivering or irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia) that can lead to stroke and other heart-related complications. In atrial fibrillation, the upper chambers of the heart (the atria) beat irregularly (quiver) instead of beating effectively to move blood into the ventricles.



SA node  
AV node

**Normal Heartbeat**

A normal “sinus rhythm” starts in the sinoatrial (SA) node and spreads down to the atrioventricular (AV) node as the atria contract and force blood into the ventricles. The ventricles then contract and pump blood out of the heart as electrical signals reach ventricular muscle cells.

Represented here is a normal rhythm of 60 beats per minute.

[Previous](#) [Next](#)

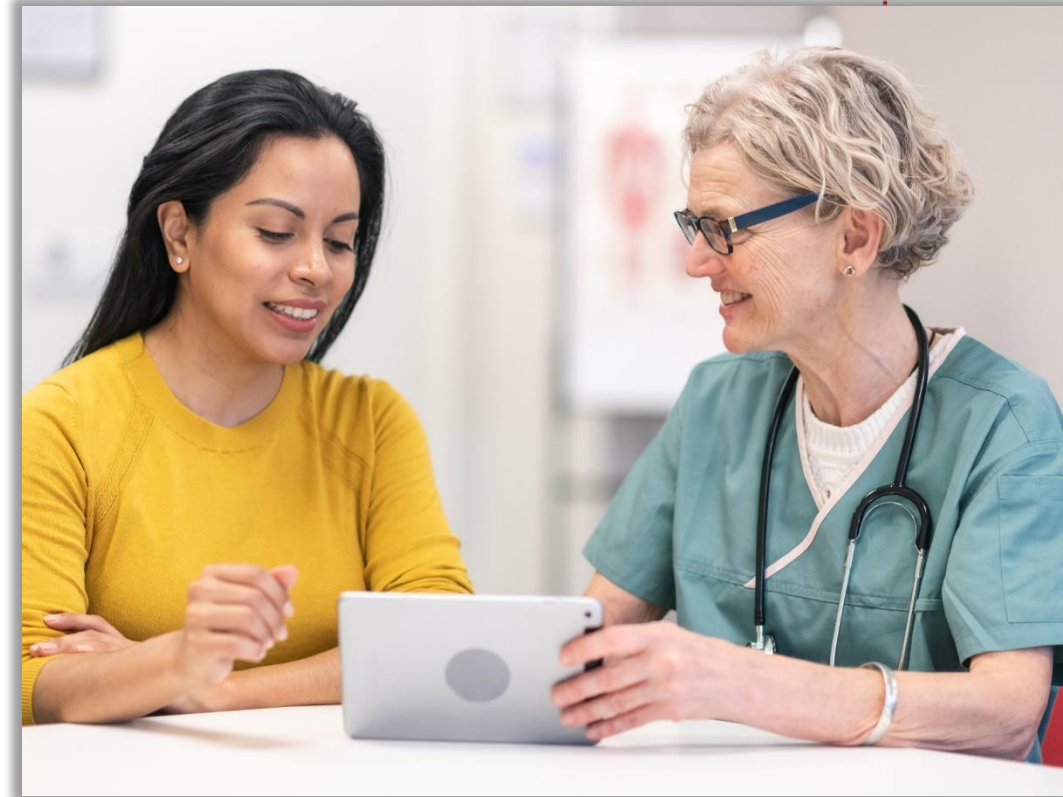




# AFIB IS ON THE RISE WORLDWIDE

## Some groups are less likely to be aware they have the condition:

- It is estimated that 12.1 million people in the United States will have AFib in 2030.
- The number of adults developing AFib increases markedly with older age.
- In a national study, Blacks were approximately one-third less likely than whites to be aware they had AFib.



# LISTEN TO YOUR HEART: ATRIAL FIBRILLATION





# WHEN HEARTS FIBRILLATE

## An introduction to atrial fibrillation



# POINT #1

Learn about AFib – signs, symptoms and increased stroke risk.



# WHAT DOES AFIB FEEL LIKE?

**“My heart flip-flops, skips beats and feels like it’s banging against my chest wall, especially if I’m carrying stuff up my stairs or bending down.”**

**“I was nauseated, light-headed and weak. I had a really fast heartbeat and felt like I was gasping for air.”**

**“I had no symptoms at all. I discovered my AF at a regular checkup. I’m glad we found it early.”**



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# WHAT ARE OTHER SYMPTOMS OF AFIB?

Sometimes, people with AFib have no symptoms, and the condition is only found through a health exam. Others may have some additional common symptoms:

- General fatigue
- Rapid and irregular heartbeat
- Fluttering or “thumping” in the chest
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Weakness
- Faintness
- Fatigue when exercising
- Sweating

Chest pain or pressure is a medical emergency. You may be having a heart attack. **Call 911 immediately.**

Some people never have symptoms and are diagnosed by a physical exam and/or heart rhythm monitoring.





# WHY DO PEOPLE DEVELOP AFIB?

## Possible risk factors for AFib are:

- Advanced age
- Heart disease (prior heart attack or heart failure)
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Excessive alcohol drinking
- Smoking
- Obesity
- Sleep apnea
- Other chronic-medical or heart-related problems
- Family history



# WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF LIVING WITH AFIB?

**Most people who have AFib are unaware of their increased risks for other health conditions, especially for stroke:**

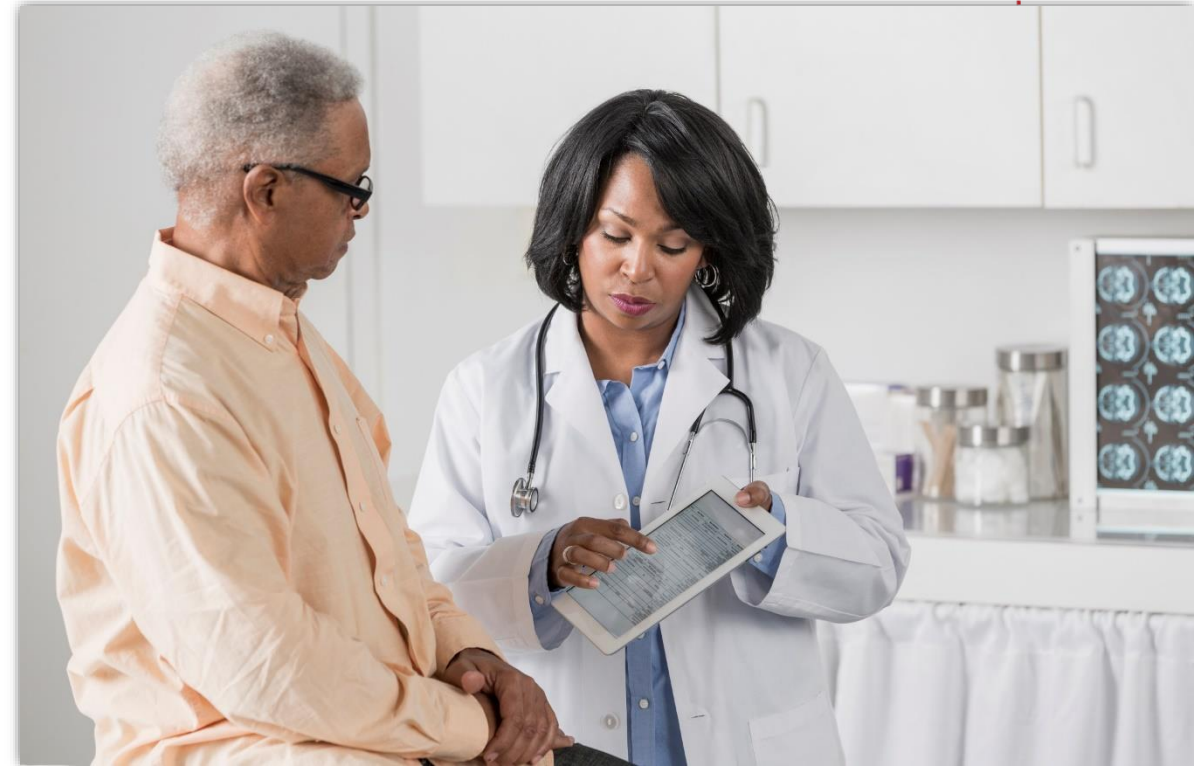
- A person with AFib is at five times higher stroke risk.
- Stroke caused by AFib are more severe than strokes from other causes.
- A person with AFib is at higher risk for heart failure.

You can live with AFib, but it can lead to other problems: chronic fatigue, heart failure and stroke. You'll need to work with your health care professional to help manage your AFib.



## POINT #2

Work with your health care professional.  
Learn how AFib can increase stroke risk.



# WORK WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL

## A health care professional can assess your heart for atrial fibrillation

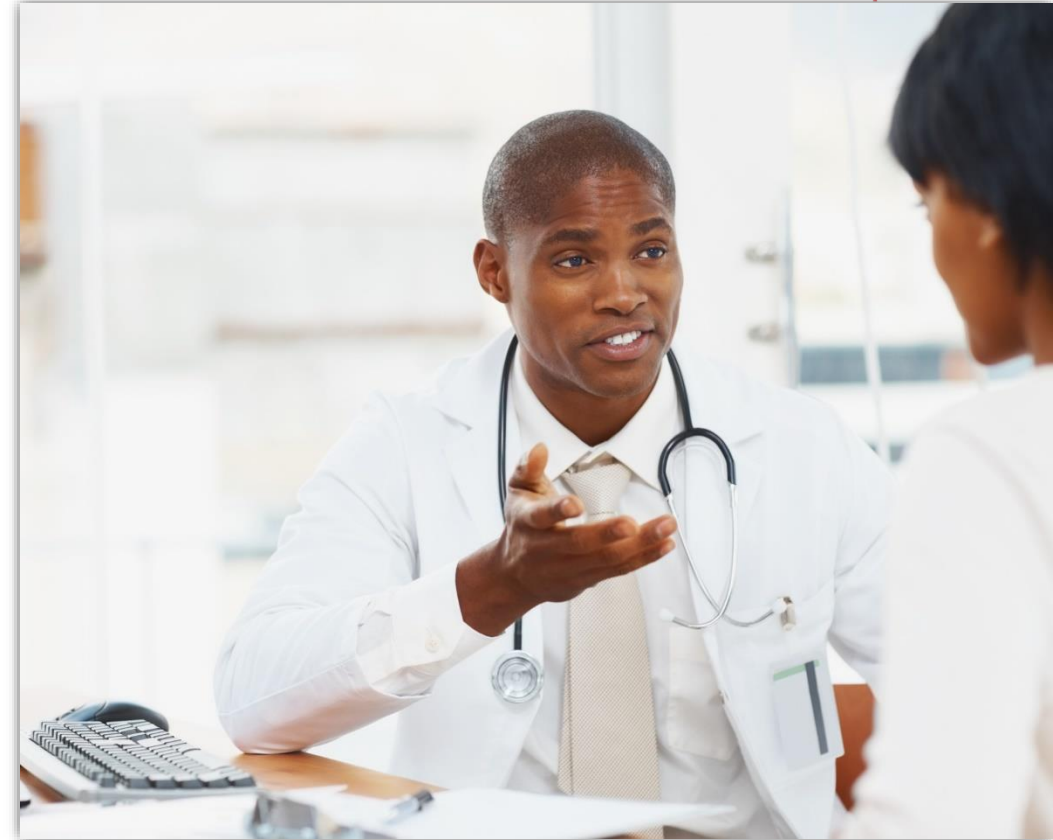
- If you have AFib, several factors such as length of symptoms and severity of AFib, will determine your health care professional's recommendation for treatment
- Treatment may include: medications, nonsurgical procedures, surgical procedures and/or healthy lifestyle changes





# AFIB CAUSES INCREASED RISK FOR ISCHEMIC STROKE

- People with AFib are five times more likely to have a stroke.
- AFib creates poor blood flow, which can lead to blood clots and stroke.
- Stroke is the No. 5 cause of death in the U.S. (No. 2 cause of death worldwide).
- Stroke is leading cause of preventable disability.

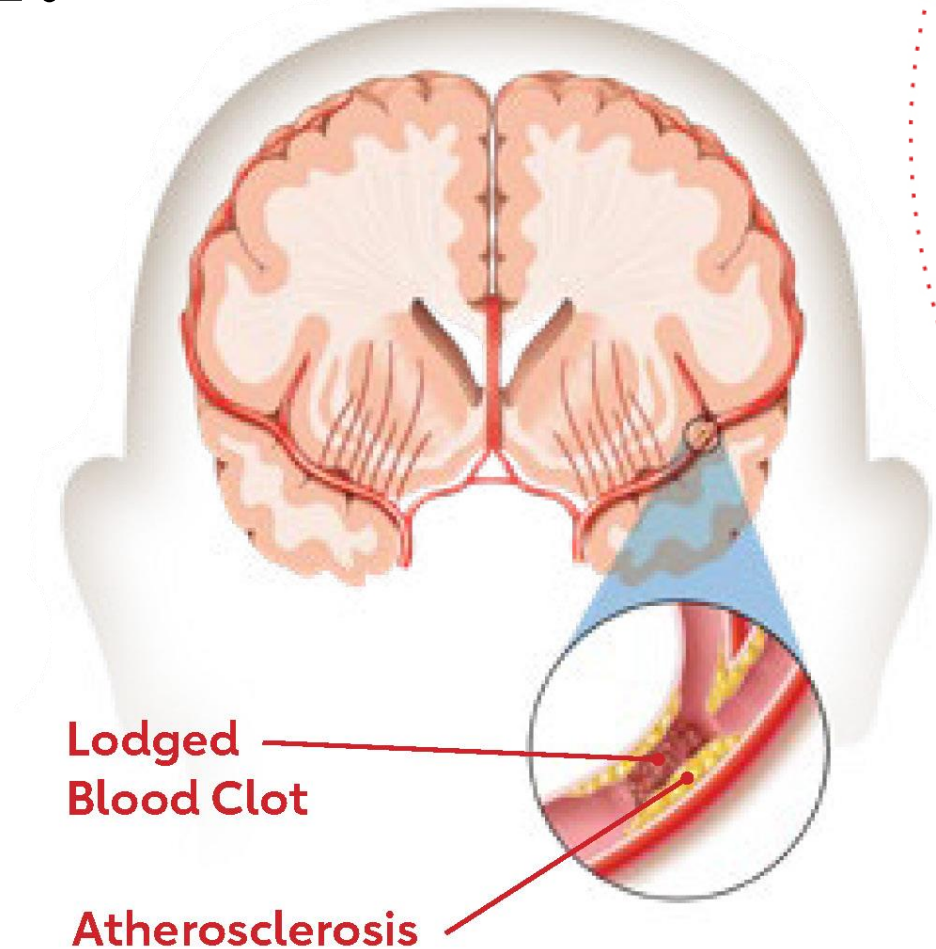


# WHAT IS AN ISCHEMIC STROKE?

**An ischemic stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is blocked by a clot.**

- When the part of the brain affected by the diseased artery cannot get enough blood and oxygen, the brain cells at that part of the brain die.
- Ischemic strokes account for about 87% of all strokes.

**If you think you are having a stroke, call 9 1 1 immediately!**

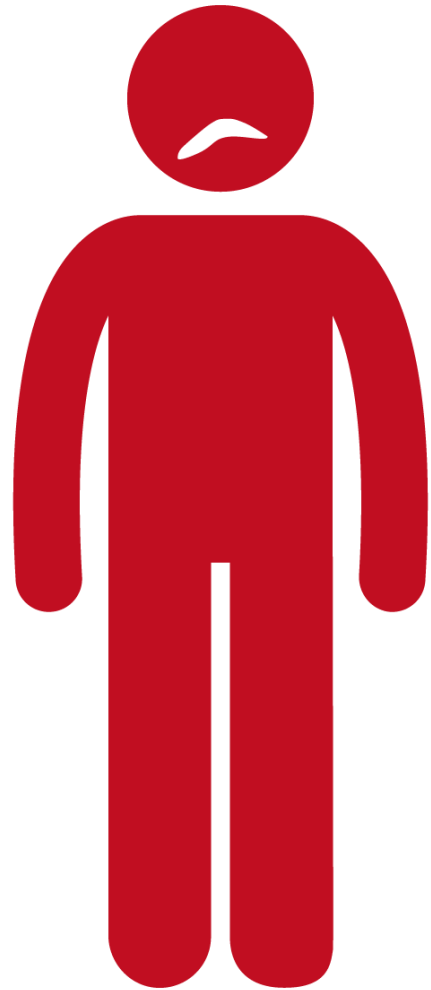


# SPOT A STROKE F.A.S.T.

F.A.S.T. is an easy way to remember the sudden signs of stroke. When you can spot the signs, you'll know that you need to call 911 for help right away.



# SPOT A STROKE F.A.S.T. (continued)



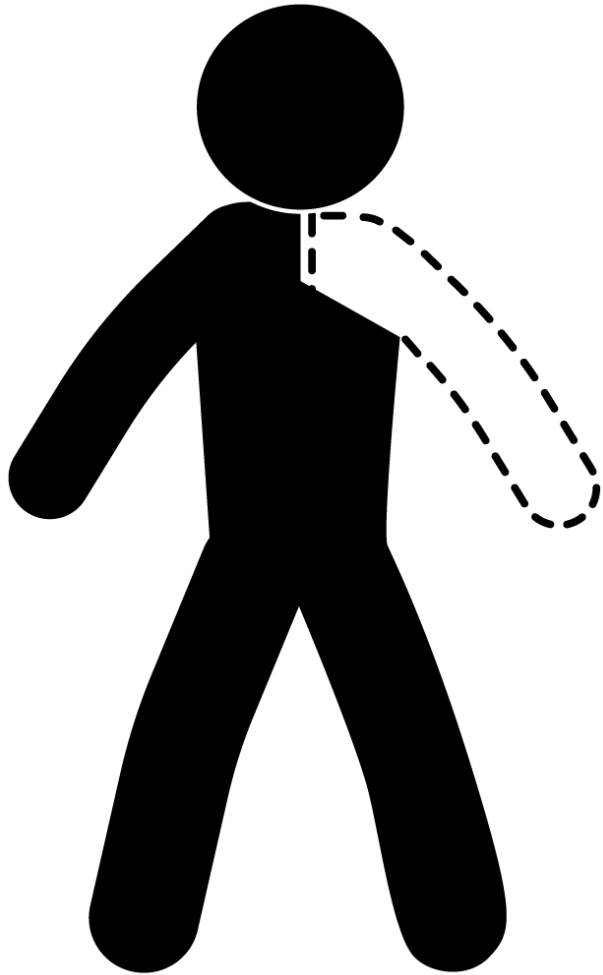
## Face Drooping

Does one side of the face droop or is it numb? Ask the person to smile. Is the person's smile uneven?





# SPOT A STROKE F.A.S.T. (continued)



## **A**rm Weakness:

Is one arm weak or numb?

Ask the person to raise both arms.

Does one arm drift downward?



# SPOT A STROKE F.A.S.T. (continued)



## **S**peech Difficulty:

Is speech slurred? Is the person unable to speak or hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a sentence, like “The sky is blue.” Is the sentence repeated correctly?



# SPOT A STROKE F.A.S.T. (continued)

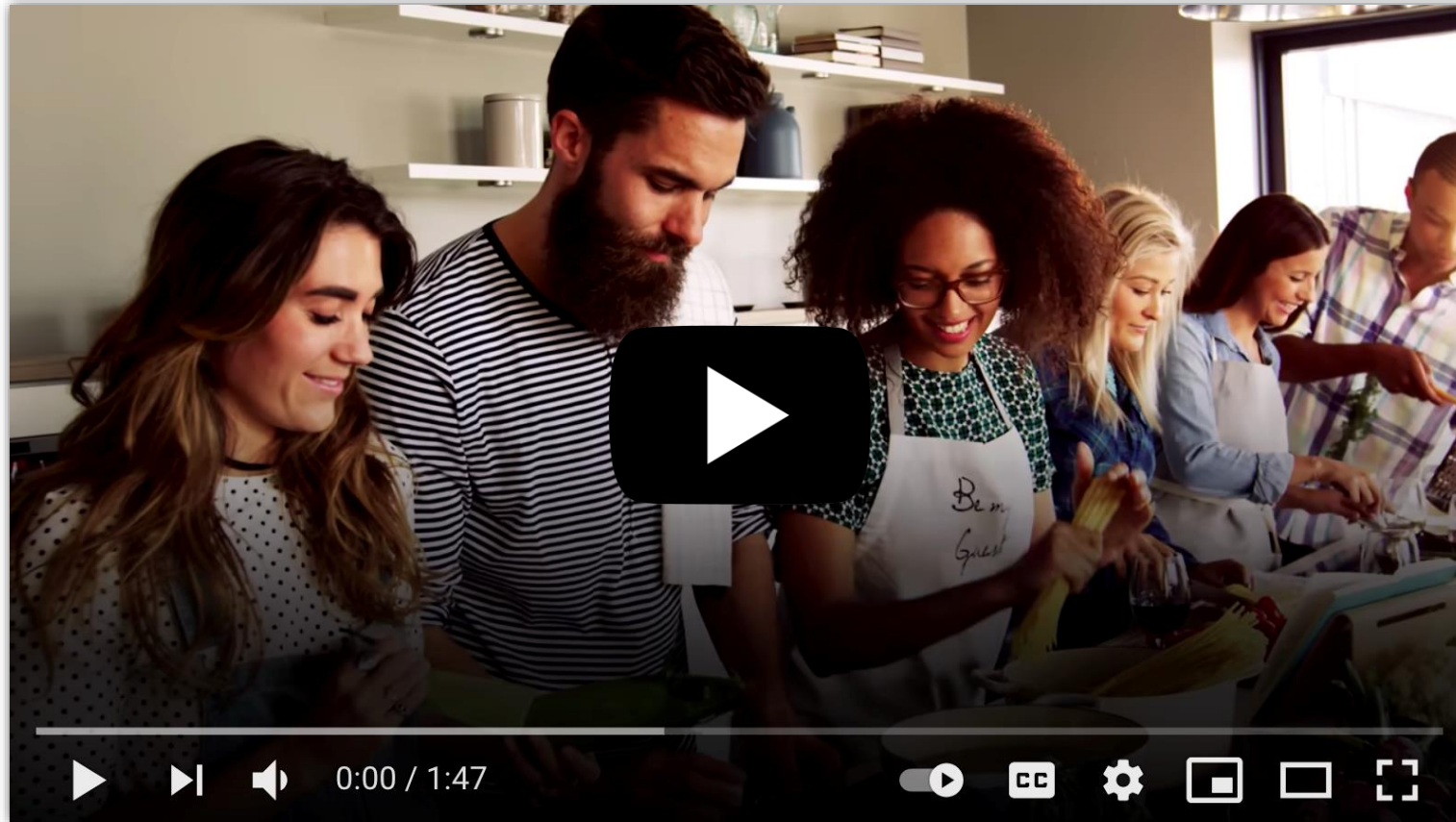


## **T**ime to Call 911:

If someone shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 911 and get the person to the hospital immediately. Check the time, so you'll know when the first symptoms appeared.



# STROKE WARNING SIGNS



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=q5XHH1XfAbM&feature=youtu.be>



# POINT #3

Live with AFib. Reduce your stroke risk.





# HOW DOES AFIB CHANGE DAILY LIFE?

**People with AFib can lead healthy, long lives while taking actions to reduce their risk for stroke and other potentially related conditions such as heart failure.**

Actions include:

- Meet regularly with your health care professional to understand your risks and treatment options (possible medications and/or procedures).
- Set personal health goals and maintain a heart-healthy lifestyle by following AHA's Life's Simple 7 (described on the next slide).
- Track your symptoms, health goals, and (if applicable) medications.



# STAY HEALTHY. FOLLOW LIFE'S SIMPLE 7®

Embrace **Life's Simple 7®** to Reduce Your Risk for Stroke. Seven Small Steps to Big Changes.

## 1. **Get Active.**

Try to get 150 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise (or a combination of both), preferably spread throughout the week.

## 2. **Eat Healthy.**

A healthy diet is one of your best weapons for fighting cardiovascular disease and stroke. When you eat a healthy diet, you improve your chances for feeling good and staying healthy – for life!

## 3. **Lose Weight** and keep your weight under control.



# STAY HEALTHY. FOLLOW LIFE'S SIMPLE 7<sup>®</sup> (continued)

## 4. Stop Smoking.

Don't smoke, vape or use tobacco or nicotine products and avoid secondhand smoke or vapor.

## 5. Control Cholesterol and treat high cholesterol if you have it.

## 6. Manage Blood Pressure and treat high blood pressure if you have it.

## 7. Reduce Blood Sugar and control your blood sugar if you have diabetes.

Plus, have regular checkups and take any medicines as prescribed.



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# LIVING WITH AFIB – MARCIE’S STORY



# JOIN THE CONVERSATION ABOUT AFIB AT [myafibexperience.org](http://myafibexperience.org)

- Online community dedicated to bringing together AFib patients and caregivers
- Hub of free resources and open discussions about living with AFib

MyAFibExperience  
An online community for people living with atrial fibrillation

Connect with People Like Me | Blog | MyAFibExperience | Log In

AFibexperience

**Lifestyle**  
Maintaining a heart-healthy lifestyle is always your best option, which includes regular exercise and a healthy diet.  
[Learn more about healthy lifestyle strategies](#)

**Newly Diagnosed**  
You may have a lot of questions or concerns. You've taken the first step toward learning more, and we're here to help.  
[Find out more about AFib](#)

**Treatment and Prevention**  
Treatment options can include medication and procedures. Know your treatment goals by working closely with your health care team.  
[Read more about treatment and prevention](#)

The American Heart Association and StopAFib.org are collaborating to support atrial fibrillation patients.  
StopAFib.org





# YOUR VOICE MATTERS

We all have the power to make a difference by speaking out for policies that help build healthier communities and healthier lives.

Join **You're the Cure** today and be among the first to know when major policy initiatives pass or when your help is needed to advocate for a healthy future.

Text **EMPOWER** to **46839** join today!



American Heart Association.  
**You're the Cure**

# USE YOUR VOICE TO CREATE HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

You can help us work to draw communities together on the path to building a sustainable culture of health.

Go to [EmPOWEREDtoServe.org](https://www.EmPOWEREDtoServe.org)

Sign up to become an ambassador and learn how you can be a part of the movement!

**Join us as we impact the health of ALL in our communities!**





# WRAP-UP

**We appreciate your thoughts!**

Tell us what you liked best.

Email us at:  
[empoweredtoserve@heart.org](mailto:empoweredtoserve@heart.org)



# WE ARE **EMPOWERED TO SERVE**

...serve our health, serve our community



**The American Heart Association requests that this document be cited as follows:**  
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