

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Atrial Fibrillation vs. Atrial Flutter**
- **Tips**
- **Sloppy Joes**
- **Atenolol**

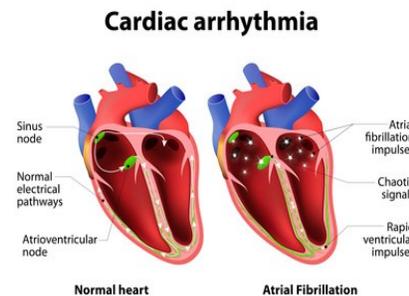
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Atrial Fibrillation vs. Atrial Flutter

What is the difference?

What is the difference between atrial fibrillation and atrial flutter? Let's start with each of their definitions. Atrial fibrillation is the most common type of abnormal heart rhythm. It is caused when the top two chambers of the heart (the atria) have disorganized electrical signals that cause the atria to fibrillate. When they fibrillate, the top chambers beat 350-600 times per minutes. Because they are beating so fast, the top chambers are not pumping effectively and all the blood is not being pumped out to the bottom chambers of the heart (the ventricles). This can allow the blood in the top part of the heart to form a blood clot. That blood clot can move to



to the brain and cause a stroke or move to another part of the body. The ventricles cannot go as fast as the atria go but they may try to keep up. For this reason the heart rate may be fast during atrial fibrillation, especially if someone is not on any medications that slow the heart rate. It is also irregular. Atrial flutter is also an abnormal heart rhythm that is similar to atrial fibrillation.

During atrial flutter, the atria go fast, but the signal is more organized and tends to come from an abnormal circuit in the right atrium. Atrial flutter can come from a circuit in the left atrium but this is considered more of an atypical flutter. So the big difference between atrial fibrillation and atrial flutter is that atrial fibrillation is more chaotic, irregular, and comes from the left atrium while atrial flutter is more organized, regular, and generally comes from the right atrium. During atrial flutter, the top chambers still beat fast around 250-350 times a minute. So for this reason, the ventricles may still race and the top chambers are still not pumping effectively. So guess what? It too can cause a stroke. (1,3,4).

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Tip of the Month

Easy ways to increase your activity:

1. Park at the end of the parking lot instead of driving around for 10 minutes to get a closer spot.
2. Take the stairs anytime you can.
3. If you have to talk on the phone, walk outside or inside while you are talking instead of sitting down.
4. Walk your dog. Everyday. Maybe twice a day.
5. Push mow the grass if you can instead of using a riding lawn mower.
6. Clean the house, even if it is a little bit at a time.
7. Join a gym. If you have exercise equipment, use it while you watch tv.





Recipe from the book
Breaking the Salt Habit by
Erik Williams. (2).

Sloppy Joes

Ingredients:

1 lb. Lean Ground Turkey
1¼ cup Onion, chopped
1¼ cup Green Pepper, chopped
1 cup NSA Ketchup
4 tsp. Brown Sugar
1 1¼ tsp. Worcestershire Sauce
¾ tsp. Mustard Powder
¾ tsp. Garlic Powder
¾ tsp. Chili Powder
1 tsp Black Pepper

½ tsp. Black Pepper
½ tsp. Celery Seed
8 Hamburger Buns

Directions:

1. Brown ground turkey in large skillet.
2. Drain and add onion and green pepper.
3. In a small bowl, add ketchup, brown sugar, Worcestershire, mustard powder, garlic powder, chili powder, black pepper, and celery seed.
4. Stir to combine.
5. Add to meat mixture and heat on low for 15-20 minutes.

Health Information

Serving size 1½ cup serving with bun
Servings 8
Calories 263
Total fat 6g
Saturated fat 2g
Cholesterol 40mg
Sodium 263 mg
Total fiber 1 g
Protein 15g
Carbohydrates 37 g
Potassium 405 mg
Sugar 11 g

Quote of the Month: “If you want something you have never had, you must be willing to do something you have never done.” Thomas Jefferson

Did you Know?

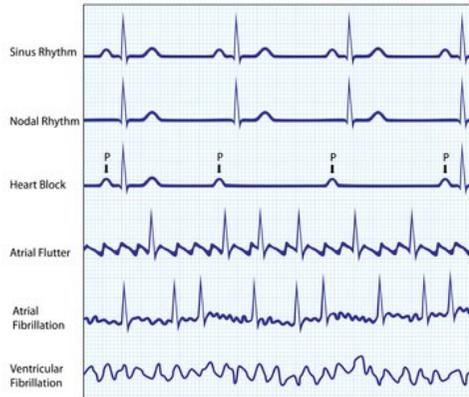
Did you know that atrial fibrillation is the most common abnormal heart rhythm problem. Between 2.7 and 6.1 million people in the United States alone have atrial fibrillation. Did you know that atrial fibrillation increases the risk of having a stroke by 4-5 times. Strokes that are caused by atrial fibrillation are usually more severe and more people die from these strokes. Did you know atrial fibrillation has many risk factors that can be treated and or prevented? Some of these include being overweight, high blood pressure, diabetes, heavy alcohol use, heart disease, and sleep apnea. Did you know that you can still have a stroke from atrial fibrillation even if your heart rhythm is back to normal? So don't stop taking the medication that is prescribed just because

you may be feeling better. Did you know that atrial fibrillation can come and go? This can make it hard to “catch” sometimes. Luckily there are all types of monitors available now that aid in making this diagnosis. Did you know that the risk of atrial fibrillation increases with age? For this reason, since women tend to live longer than men, women have higher rates of atrial fibrillation. Did you know that if atrial fibrillation is treated and kept under control, people can still lead active and normal lives. Did you know that September is atrial fibrillation awareness month? So if you or anyone you know has symptoms of atrial fibrillation, don't delay, get an appointment with your health care provider to see if atrial fibrillation is the problem. (5,6).

ACT FAST at the FIRST SIGN of STROKE



Normal and Pathological Electrocardiograms



Ignore the other strips on this image as they do not pertain to this discussion. However, the difference between atrial fibrillation and atrial flutter can be seen on an EKG or telemetry strip shown here.

The atrial flutter strip shows well defined “sawtooth” markings and is generally regular, at least the waves from the top chamber are. Where as the atrial fibrillation strip is not. It looks chaotic and irregular.

Are there different symptoms of Atrial Fibrillation and Atrial Flutter? The symptoms may be the same. Some individuals may tolerate atrial flutter more just because it is more organized but the symptoms can be the same. Symptoms can include shortness of breath, fatigue, chest pain, dizziness, passing out or near passing out episodes, and fluid build up. Again, both of these rhythms can cause a stroke and because both of them have a tendency to make the heart go fast, both

can lead to a weakening of the heart muscle and heart failure.

Is the treatment different for Atrial Fibrillation vs. Atrial Flutter? Preventing stroke and heart failure come first. So the first step is starting an appropriate blood thinner. Generally speaking, these medications include Coumadin, Pradaxa, Xarelto, Eliquis, and Savaysa. If someone is in the hospital, Lovenox or Heparin may be used temporarily until all the testing is completed. The next step is to control the heart rate so the heart muscle does not weaken. This can usually be achieved thru medications such as Metoprolol and Cardizem. Because atrial flutter usually comes from the right side of the heart and is usually caused by one abnormal circuit, many times an ablation is recommended on the first encounter of atrial flutter. This is because this is a relatively safe cardiac procedure and comes with a high success rate. This also decreases the chances of recurrence and limits the need for some medications. Atrial fibrillation is not as straightforward. There are many medications that can be given to help slow down the heart rate for atrial fibrillation as listed above. Sometimes, the rhythm itself continues to cause symptoms and the heart needs to be “shocked” back in rhythm. This is called a cardioversion. If the rhythm comes back after that, then stronger medications may be given to keep the heart in normal rhythm. These are called antiarrhythmic medications. An ablation on the left side of the heart can also be performed if the medications fail. (1,3,4).