

Dr. Prystowsky on Atrial Fibrillation

What is A-Fib?

Atrial fibrillation (A-Fib) a rapid rhythm in the top of the heart that, when it gets conducted to the bottom of the heart, can create a mess of symptoms for patients. These symptoms can include feeling like your heart is beating erratically and fast; dizziness; passing out; breathing problems; and sometimes a large amount of fatigue.

It's a symptomatic rhythm and occurs commonly. It can be associated with some bad outcomes like an increase in mortality, and can also cause heart failure. So it's a rhythm we need to treat aggressively and quickly.

People with A-Fib sometimes don't even know they have it and that can be the worse situation. Particularly in older people, it's one of the causes of stroke because clots can form in the upper chambers of the heart during A-Fib. If you don't know you have it, one of the first presentations may actually be a stroke. One of the slides I use in my lectures says, "the most important thing in the treatment of A-Fib is to preserve the brain." Once a patient has a stroke, it a different ballgame.

St.Vincent Heart Center of Indiana started the A-Fib Center of Excellence to provide patients and referring physicians a mechanism, if only used once, to see a super specialist in the area of heart rhythm problems. We will explain to you in detail your problem, what the treatment options are, and work together to decide what's best for you. We can offer patients a wide variety of treatment options to cure A-Fib with catheter techniques and drug treatments that weren't available 10—15 years ago to suppress rhythms. The beauty of the A-Fib Center of Excellence is that you just show up at our door and we'd be happy to take it the rest of the way.

Go to **BestHeartCare.com** to learn more about the A-Fib Center of Excellence at St.Vincent Heart Center of Indiana.

