

# A DECISION AID FOR AFIB STROKE PREVENTION FOR PATIENTS WITH ATRIAL FIBRILLATION



For Patients with LOW RISK



You have **atrial fibrillation**, also known as AFib, which means you have an irregular heart beat. This is a very common heart rhythm problem.

People with AFib tend to have a higher chance of **stroke**. A stroke is where part of your brain dies. It can be very serious, causing permanent harm or death.

**Irregular heart beats** from AFib can cause blood to collect in the heart and form a **blood clot**. This clot may travel to the brain and could prevent blood flow, resulting in a **stroke**.

Each person's risk for stroke is different – patients can be at low, moderate or high risk for stroke. This booklet is for patients who are **low risk**, which means there is nothing more you need to be doing.

We know talking about strokes can be scary. But, knowing how you can help reduce your risk for stroke is important. And, understanding your options may help you decide **what is best for you, your health, and your lifestyle.**

# ▶ YOUR STROKE RISK AND OPTIONS

You've been given this booklet because you have a **low risk** for stroke with your AFib. This is likely because you are under the age of 65 and do not have many other illnesses or conditions.

For people with a low risk for stroke, clinicians usually recommend that **nothing** additional needs to be done for stroke prevention. Your risk is low enough that **medicines would likely not be helpful** and would carry **more risks than benefits** for you.



## Stroke Risk per Year

Each year, less than **1 out of 100** people like you will have a stroke.



Clinicians used to tell patients with AFib and low stroke risk to take a daily aspirin. However, new research suggests that aspirin does not provide significant benefit for treating AFib (Note: aspirin is helpful for other conditions like heart attacks). You should **talk to a clinician** about your stroke risk from AFib and other medical considerations, and what he or she thinks should be done.

So the good news is that there is likely nothing you need to do at this time! However, AFib is a chronic illness and the stroke risk is affected by other factors, such as development of other illnesses. Thus, stroke risk with AFib often increases over time, so taking blood thinners to reduce the chance of stroke may be appropriate in the future. That's why it's important to continue talking with your doctor regularly.

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