

## Understand the risks



Atrial fibrillation (AFib) can lead to **blood clots** inside your heart. These clots can travel to your brain and **cause a stroke**.

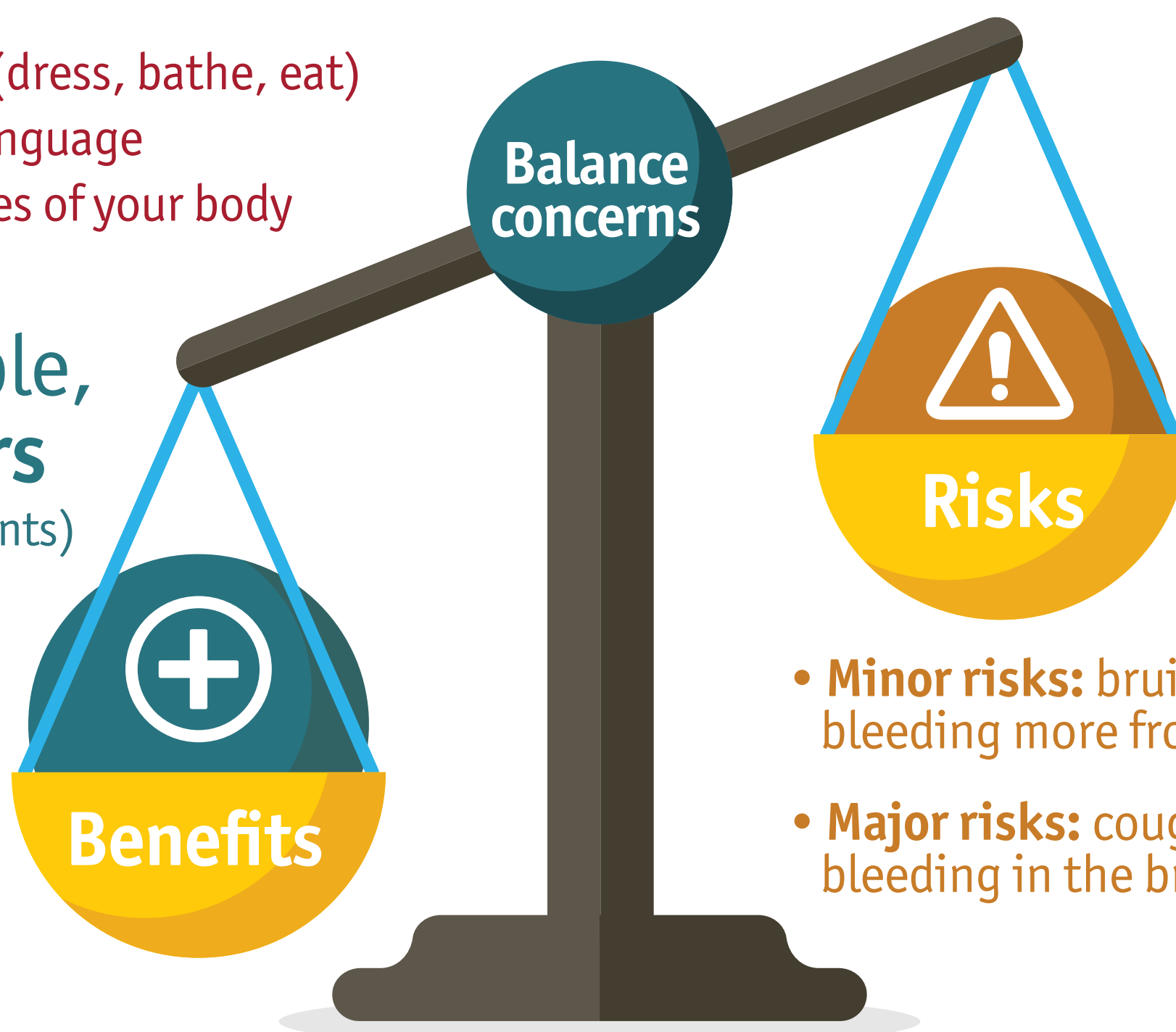


If you have AFib, you are **5x more likely to have a stroke**. It also **doubles the risk** a stroke may leave you unable to:

- Take care of yourself (dress, bathe, eat)
- Talk or understand language
- Move one or both sides of your body

For most people, **blood thinners** (also called anticoagulants)

- **Lower the risk** of stroke
- **Reduce the blood's ability to clot**



**Blood thinners make bleeding more likely**

- **Minor risks:** bruising more easily, bleeding more from a cut
- **Major risks:** coughing up blood, bleeding in the brain

For some patients, placing a device in the heart may be another option to lower stroke risk.

The **benefit** of preventing a stroke often **outweighs** any related bleeding **risks**. Also, bleeding usually can be stopped.

### What you can do



**1 Know and weigh your risks** of stroke and bleeding



**2 Partner with your care team**



**3 Use a decision worksheet** to help you learn more about your options for lowering stroke risk, such as [CardioSmart.org/SDMAFib](https://www.cardiosmart.org/SDMAFib)

For more information, visit [CardioSmart.org/AFandStroke](https://www.cardiosmart.org/AFandStroke)

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