

# Using anticoagulants when you have atrial fibrillation

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact: \_\_\_\_\_

General practitioner: \_\_\_\_\_

Other healthcare providers: \_\_\_\_\_

This plan is about lowering your stroke risk and staying well when you have atrial fibrillation. There are spaces for you or your health professional to type or write extra information.

## About atrial fibrillation

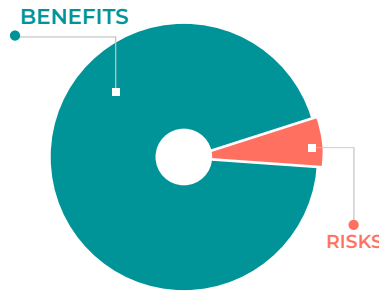
Atrial fibrillation (AF) is a condition where your heart beats irregularly. If you have AF you may get palpitations (fast heart beats), dizziness, or shortness of breath. AF affects blood flow in the heart and may cause blood clots. A clot that reaches the brain can block or reduce blood flow and it can cause a stroke. A stroke causes damage to the brain. This damage can affect how you talk, swallow, move and think. It can be permanent or temporary.

Scan the QR code to learn more about AF and stroke prevention.



## Why anticoagulants are important

- Anticoagulants are a type of blood thinner. They make it harder for blood to clot. This helps lower the risk of having a stroke.
- People with AF have a high risk of stroke. These strokes tend to cause serious damage to the brain with long-lasting effects.
- Anticoagulants are usually needed lifelong.



- Anticoagulants may make bleeding and bruising more likely.
- Serious bleeding from the gut or inside the brain can happen but is very rare.
- Talk with your health professional about what you can do to lower your risk of bleeding.
- There are medicines that can be used to reverse serious bleeds.

**For most people with AF, taking anticoagulant medication has much more benefit than risk**

## Taking an anticoagulant reduces stroke risk (health professional to complete)

Medicine name	<a href="#">CLEAR TABLE</a>	Dose	When to take	Medicine information
<input type="checkbox"/> Apixaban	<input type="checkbox"/> Rivaroxaban			
<input type="checkbox"/> Dabigatran	<input type="checkbox"/> Warfarin			

## When you take an anticoagulant:

- Make sure all your health professionals know. This includes your blood collector, dentist, dietician, GP, nurse, pharmacist, physiotherapist, podiatrist and specialist.
- Take care with activities that could lead to injury or cause bleeding.
- Talk with your health professional about how you can limit your risk of bleeding.
- Contact your doctor if you notice unusual bruising or bleeding.
- Use an medical alert card or bracelet.



**STOPPING WILL RAISE YOUR RISK OF STROKE.**  
Do not stop your anticoagulant unless clearly advised by your health professional.



### Questions about your medicines?

Call 1300 633 424 (1300 MEDICINE)

A free Australian Government-funded service staffed by registered pharmacists.

# Living well with atrial fibrillation

## Know the symptoms



Feeling dizzy or faint



Shortness of breath



Fluttering or pounding heart



Extreme tiredness



Chest pain

Contact your health professional within 24 hours of noticing any new or worsening symptoms.

Anticoagulants are just for stroke prevention in AF. Other treatments are needed to help with these symptoms.

Not everyone with atrial fibrillation will have symptoms.

## Use your medicines safely

- Take your medicines as prescribed by your doctor, every day, even when you feel well.
- If you need help keeping track of your medicines, talk with your pharmacist.
- Check with your prescriber or pharmacist before starting any new medicine, including over-the-counter products.



Ways to help your heart	My goals	How I will reach them
<input type="checkbox"/> Aim for a healthy weight		
<input type="checkbox"/> Control blood pressure		
<input type="checkbox"/> Stop smoking		
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce alcohol		
<input type="checkbox"/> Move your body		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other actions		

## Connect



If you are feeling anxious or concerned reach out to:

- family or friends
- other people with AF who will understand how you are feeling
- a trusted health professional



[About atrial fibrillation](#)



[About stroke prevention](#)



[About wellbeing](#)

## Go straight to a hospital or CALL 000 and ask for an ambulance, if any of these happen:

### Signs of stroke

- **F:** face drooped
- **A:** arms can't be raised
- **S:** speech slurred or confused
- **T:** time is critical call 000



### Signs of serious bleeding

- Nose bleeds that do not stop
- Coughing or vomiting blood
- Blood in urine or bowel movements
- Bleeding or bruising that gets worse
- Sudden and severe headache



## Quality Use of Medicines Alliance



Endorsed by:

