

## Healthy Living Tips From



200 Trenton Road • Browns Mills, NJ 08015

### HEALTHY LIFESTYLE TIPS: When Your Heart Gets Out of Step

The most common irregular heartbeat is Atrial Fibrillation (A-Fib), during which the heart's upper chambers (atria) beat out of coordination with the lower chambers (ventricles). It reduces your heart's ability to pump blood through your body, which means you do not get enough oxygen.

Atrial Fibrillation may come and go -- and it can be symptomless -- or it may be a long-term condition. When symptoms do appear, they include: Racing heart and palpitations, shortness of breath, chest pain/pressure, and fatigue. It's very important to treat and manage atrial fibrillation, to help prevent a blood clot or stroke.

Possible causes of atrial fibrillation include: Untreated sleep apnea; high blood pressure; stress; stimulants such as caffeine, tobacco, alcohol or certain medications; damage to the heart from a virus or heart attack.

#### How can Atrial Fibrillation be treated?

- HEART MEDICINES help control heart rate and rhythm. Some individuals may need more than one medicine to treat their symptoms, which are best managed if treatment commences less than one year from onset of the arrhythmia.
- ELECTRIC CARDIOVERSION is an external procedure to return the heart rate and rhythm to normal. Performed using electric shock, it is more successful if treatment commences less than one year from onset. It is not necessarily a long-term treatment and frequently needs to be repeated.
- STEREOTAXIS ABLATION is a state-of-the-art, safer technology used to access, identify and treat arrhythmic pathways of the heart, correcting the arrhythmia by deactivating the tissue causing it.
- A PACEMAKER may be indicated, to control your heartbeat.

BLOOD THINNERS and antiplatelet meds help prevent blood clots from forming in the left atrial appendage, as clots can cause strokes, heart attacks, and death. Blood thinners include warfarin and heparin, with aspirin the commonly used antiplatelet medication.

*NOTE:* There is a new state-of-the-art alternative to long-term blood-thinner therapy, called the WATCHMAN™ Implant. This minimally invasively-implanted device is a breakthrough for patients with atrial fibrillation who use a blood thinner and are seeking a permanent non-drug alternative.

*For an appointment with a Deborah specialist or more information about how Deborah Heart and Lung Center's leading-edge technologies can improve your quality of life: 800.555.1990 or request info/an appointment: [www.demanddeborah.org](http://www.demanddeborah.org) ~*