

What do I do if I think I am having an Atrial Fibrillation (AFib) episode?



This is what Dr. Paul Dorian, cardiologist and expert in the management of atrial fibrillation, tells his patients to do if they think that they are having an AFib episode:

Take a few deep breaths – the majority of these episodes settle down on their own. Atrial fibrillation is hardly ever dangerous.

In most cases, you do not have to go to the hospital. Here is what you can do:

- Ensure you have taken your medicines
- If you have instructions for additional medicines, follow them

Otherwise, sit down, rest and wait 12 or more hours for your symptoms to settle. If you still do not feel better, call your family doctor who may want to adjust your medicines.

If you still feel the same way 24 hours later, and you have not seen or spoken to a health care provider, it is reasonable to go to the hospital.

Seek urgent medical care if you feel extremely unwell. For example, if you:

- Cannot stand up or walk across the room
- Feel very short of breath even when sitting still
- Have severe chest pain
- If you have a fainting spell

Just remember, AFib is not usually an emergency. Discuss with your doctor what you should do when you have an AFib episode.