



## ATRIAL FIBRILLATION AND STROKE FACT SHEET

### ATRIAL FIBRILLATION

Atrial fibrillation, or AFib, is a potentially serious condition in which the heart does not beat the way it should,<sup>1</sup> and can result in the formation of blood clots.<sup>1</sup> These clots may travel from the heart to the brain, where they can potentially lead to a stroke.<sup>1</sup>

### SYMPTOMS OF ATRIAL FIBRILLATION

Many people with AFib do not have any symptoms. Others may experience symptoms including:<sup>2</sup>

- Racing, irregular heartbeat
- Fluttering in the chest
- Heart palpitations
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Weakness
- Faintness
- Fatigue when exercising
- Sweating

### ATRIAL FIBRILLATION-RELATED STROKES

Stroke is a major complication of AFib.<sup>1</sup> Living with AFib increases a person's risk of stroke by nearly five-fold.<sup>3</sup> Atrial fibrillation-related strokes can be about twice as likely to be fatal<sup>4</sup> or severely disabling as non-AFib-related strokes;<sup>5</sup> however, this risk can be significantly reduced.<sup>6</sup>

### ATRIAL FIBRILLATION IN AMERICA

- An estimated 2.3 million Americans have AFib<sup>7</sup>, making it one of the most serious common heart rhythm disorder<sup>7</sup>
  - It is projected that by 2050, 5.6 million U.S. adults will have AFib<sup>7</sup>
- Up to 15 percent of all strokes in the U.S. are associated with AFib<sup>3</sup>
- Three to five percent of Americans over the age of 65 have AFib<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> NHLBI website. "What is AFib?" Available at:  
[http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/af/af\\_what.html](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/af/af_what.html). Accessed on: May 2, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> NHLBI website. "What Are the Signs and Symptoms of Atrial Fibrillation?" Available at:  
[http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/af/af\\_signs.html](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/af/af_signs.html). Accessed on: May 2, 2011

<sup>3</sup> Fuster, V., et al. "ACC/AHA/ESC 2006 Guidelines for the Management of Patients With Atrial Fibrillation – Executive Summary: A Report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines and the European Society of Cardiology Committee for Practice Guidelines (Writing Committee to Revise the 2001 Guidelines for the Management of Patients With Atrial Fibrillation): Developed in Collaboration With the European Heart Rhythm Association and the Heart Rhythm Society." *Circulation*. 2006; 114:700-752.

<sup>4</sup> Lin, H., et al. "Stroke Severity in Atrial Fibrillation: The Framingham Study." *Stroke*. 1996; 27:1760-1764.

<sup>5</sup> Dulli, D.A., et al. "Atrial Fibrillation is Associated with Severe Ischemic Stroke." *Neuroepidemiology*. 2003; 22:118-123.

<sup>6</sup> Hart, R.G., et al. "Meta-analysis: Antithrombotic Therapy to Prevent Stroke in Patients Who Have Nonvalvular Atrial Fibrillation." *Annals of Internal Medicine*. 2007; 146:857-867.

<sup>7</sup> Go, A.S., et al. "Prevalence of Diagnosed Atrial Fibrillation in Adults: National Implications for Rhythm Management and Stroke Prevention: the AnTicoagulation and Risk Factors In Atrial Fibrillation (ATRIA) Study." *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2001; 285:2370-2375.

<sup>8</sup> AHA Website. "Atrial Fibrillation: What is Atrial Fibrillation?"  
<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4451>. Accessed on May 2, 2011.