

Patient Information Atrial Flutter

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Atrial flutter is an abnormal heart rhythm in which abnormal electrical signals in the heart's top chamber (atria) result in a rapid heartbeat.
- Atrial flutter is very similar to atrial fibrillation, another type of heart rhythm disorder.
- With atrial flutter blood can pool, leading to small blood clots forming in the heart.
- These clots can dislodge, travel to the brain and cause strokes.

SYMPTOMS

- Sensation of your heart racing
- Chest discomfort
- Shortness of breath, especially with physical activity
- Swelling in your legs or feet

DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

- Atrial flutter is typically diagnosed with a simple test called an electrocardiogram, or "EKG".
- Other tests may include an echocardiogram, an ultrasound of the heart.
- Your doctor may order blood tests to check your thyroid function.

TREATMENT

- Medications to slow your heart rate and control its rhythm.
- Blood thinners to prevent clots from forming and possibly leading to stroke.
- "Cardioversion" is a procedure used to restore the heart's normal rhythm. It is performed by giving the patient a sedative and then applying an electrical current to the chest. It is usually done as an outpatient procedure.
- Ablation, another procedure, can be performed if atrial flutter comes back after cardioversion. Although more invasive than a cardioversion, this is generally very safe and effective in restoring the heart's normal rhythm.

FOR MORE INFORMATION or to make an appointment at URMC Cardiology at Highland Hospital, please call (585) 341-6780 or visit us online at www.highlandheart.urmc.edu