

Atrial Flutter



What is it?

Atrial flutter is a condition where the upper chambers of your heart (atria) beat in a very rapid manner causing the lower chambers (ventricles) to also beat rapidly. Some patients have atrial flutter only while others have both atrial flutter and atrial fibrillation. Atrial fibrillation is a different rhythm problem. Ablation for atrial flutter can in some cases improve atrial fibrillation, but not always.

Tests We Do

The most common test we do to diagnose the exact circuit the Flutter is taking is an Electrophysiology (EP) study. A routine ECG while you are in Flutter will tell us most of what we need to know. However, to treat the problem, an EP study is required to identify which part of the heart to burn in order to eliminate the atrial flutter.

Treatment

Treatment of atrial flutter requires discussion with your doctor, but usually starts with drugs. The electrophysiology study (EP Study) and catheter ablation procedure will destroy the short circuit and in most cases cure your Flutter. The success rate for catheter ablation is 95-99% with the first procedure. Some people have a recurrence of their flutter and need a second procedure. Usually a line of burns is required at the bottom of the right atrium to stop atrial flutter.

Risks

As in any medical procedure, there are risks that you should be aware of. The overall risk of something bad happening is only 1-2%. The risks are:

- Collapsed Lung
- Bleeding / bruising
- Infection
- Damage to heart and/or blood vessels
- Blood clots in vein
- Mild pain at the insertion site

FAQ's

- Q. How long will the ablation take?
A. On the average, 3-6 hours!
- Q. When can I go home after?
A. Most people go home the same day or next morning.
- Q. Who is doing the procedure?
A. We have a team of 4 doctors. On any given day, you could have any one of them but they work closely as a team and more than one may be involved if required
- Q. Will I be put to sleep for the procedure?
A. General anesthesia is not generally needed for the procedure but an anesthesiologist or the nurses may give you medications to help you relax and sleep during the procedure.