



Atrial fibrillation (AFIB) is the most common irregular heart rhythm, affecting more than 2.5 million people in the United States. Until recently, limited options rendered treatment of AFIB unsatisfying. This situation has changed with the development of new techniques and technology for restoration of normal cardiac rhythm. St. Joseph's Hospital physicians have extensive experience with catheter- and surgical-based approaches to treat AFIB, offering a complete range of therapeutic options.

To find out if you are a candidate for intervention, contact St. Joseph's Hospital Advanced Center For Atrial Fibrillation for a free consultation with our registered nurse (RN).

**St. Joseph's Hospital**  
**Advanced Center For Atrial Fibrillation**  
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[AdvancedAFIBCenter.com](http://AdvancedAFIBCenter.com)

St. Joseph's Hospitals Foundation relies on the generous support of our community to continually improve patient care at St. Joseph's Hospital, St. Joseph's Women's Hospital, St. Joseph's Children's Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital-North. Funds contributed make possible new facilities and equipment, community education and outreach, and special programs to sustain excellence. Individuals, businesses and foundations provide funding through an array of programs, campaigns and events. For more information on how you can help, call (813) 872-0979 or visit [SJHFoundation.org](http://SJHFoundation.org).

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## Advanced Center For Atrial Fibrillation



 **St. Joseph's Hospital**  
 BayCare Health System  
**HEART INSTITUTE**

[AdvancedAFIBCenter.com](http://AdvancedAFIBCenter.com)

# What Is Atrial Fibrillation?

Atrial fibrillation (AFIB) is an irregular heartbeat. In a normal heart, an electrical impulse passes through the top portions of the heart (atria) in an orderly fashion. With AFIB, multiple impulses begin simultaneously and essentially compete with one another. The result is a very rapid and disorganized heartbeat.

AFIB is generally classified into three categories, although treatment is very dependent upon many conditions and variables. Paroxysmal is when the AFIB episode is intermittent, meaning it comes and goes. Persistent AFIB occurs more frequently and it may or may not be responsive to drug therapy. Permanent AFIB means the heart is in a constant AFIB state and does not respond to traditional therapy.

## Why Is Atrial Fibrillation Dangerous?

AFIB is a progressive disorder that usually gets worse over time. Permanent atrial fibrillation can result in future problems such as:

- Increased risk of stroke
- Heart failure
- Cognitive dysfunction
- Premature death



## What Causes Atrial Fibrillation?

In most cases, no underlying heart disease is found. In some cases, AFIB may be related to alcohol or excessive caffeine use, stress, certain drugs, electrolyte or metabolic imbalances, or severe infections. In some cases, no cause can be found.

## Treatment Options for Atrial Fibrillation

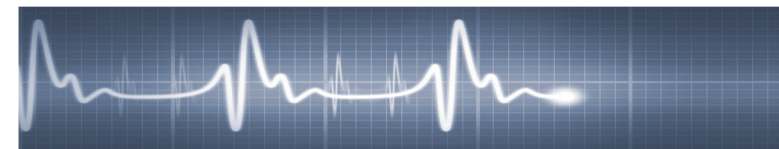
- Blood thinning drugs
- Rate control drugs
- Rhythm control drugs
- Pacemakers to prevent AFIB
- Pacemaker and AV node ablation
- Pulmonary vein isolation
- Cryoablation
- Convergent
- Surgical Maze

## Advanced New Procedures Available

The inconsistent efficacy and potential toxicity of traditional drug therapy have led to alternative nondrug therapies for the prevention and control of atrial fibrillation including:

- Catheter-based approaches
- Minimally invasive and catheter/surgical approaches
- Minimally invasive surgical approaches
- Surgical Cox Maze procedure

All of these procedures are offered through St. Joseph's Hospital's Heart Institute. Specific clinical criteria is used to determine what options may be available based on an individual's specific situation.



The goals of these new procedures are to:

- Increase quality of life
- Decrease symptoms of AFIB
- Decrease the use of medications

## Services Offered

Treatments are evolving and the various options can be difficult to understand, so St. Joseph's Hospital Advanced Center For Atrial Fibrillation provides a range of educational materials and free consultations with a registered nurse (RN) for individuals who have previously been diagnosed with atrial fibrillation to discuss potential nondrug treatment options.

- No prescription or referral is needed to take advantage of the free consultation with the RN. The RN will review your cardiac history, related family history and other clinical data that your doctor may have collected in diagnosing you with atrial fibrillation.
- If you meet clinical criteria for nonsurgical and/or surgical intervention, we will expedite a consultation for you with an electrophysiologist or surgeon who performs these services at St. Joseph's Hospital.
- The Center's staff will communicate (with your permission) any recommendations generated during the consultation to any physicians that you designate.

**For more information or to schedule a free consultation: (813) 877-AFIB (2342)**