Patient Information
You may have atrial fibrillation and may be at risk of a stroke.

Taking an anticoagulant medication may prevent a stroke.

Atrial fibrillation (AFib) is a heartbeat irregularity. If you have AFib your blood can pool, which increases the risk of a blood clot forming in your heart. The blood clot can travel to your brain, causing a stroke.

Anticoagulant medications, also called blood thinners, can prevent most strokes in patients with AFib. If you are not taking an anticoagulant medication, you may suffer a stroke that could have been prevented.

Please review this information and talk with your doctor to find out if you should be on an anticoagulant medication to prevent a stroke.

How do I know if I’m at a high risk for stroke?
If you have AFib, you are at a higher risk of stroke. You are at additional risk if you:

- Have high blood pressure
- Have high blood sugar
- Have weak heart function
- Have had a stroke or mini-stroke
- Have had a heart attack or a blocked vessel in your leg
- Are over 64 years old
- Are a woman

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed, if you have liver or kidney problems, or are planning to have surgery.

What is an anticoagulant?
Anticoagulants are medications that:

- Prevent blood clots
- Keep existing clots from moving

Examples include: Coumadin®, Eliquis®, Pradaxa®, Savaysa®, warfarin, and Xarelto®.*

*The information in this mailing is NOT sponsored by any drug company.

For more information, please visit IMPACT-AFib.org
How can I keep myself safe from bleeding and falls?
(As with other medications, there is a risk of experiencing side effects while taking anticoagulants. The main side effect is that you can bleed too easily.)

- Use a soft bristle toothbrush and waxed dental floss
- Use an electric razor to shave
- Be careful with sharp objects: toothpicks, knives, tools, scissors, etc.
- Wear shoes or non-skid slippers at all times
- Avoid nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen, naproxen, etc.
- Be careful when trimming toenails or callouses
- Avoid activities that increase risk of falls or involve hard contact, such as contact sports

Is it OK to take an anticoagulant medication if I have had bleeding? What if I fall?

- If you are at high risk for bleeding, the use of an anticoagulant medication depends on whether the benefit of preventing a stroke is more important than the risk of bleeding. Talk with your doctor about your risk.
- The benefits of preventing stroke outweigh the risk of bleeding for many people who might fall.

If I have bleeding, is there something to reverse the effect of anticoagulant medications? An antidote?
- Yes, there are antidotes for warfarin and Pradaxa®
- Reversal drugs are in development for other anticoagulant medications
- There is no antidote for aspirin

Will an anticoagulant medicine interact with other medicines or foods?
- Warfarin interacts with foods that are high in vitamin K
  - You should ask your doctor or pharmacist for a list of food interactions
- Xarelto® should be taken with food to help your body absorb the medicine

Talk with your doctor or pharmacist if you have questions about any medications or foods that might affect your anticoagulant medication, including nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

Am I at risk for stroke?
- The CHA_Ds2-VASc calculates stroke risk for patients with atrial fibrillation.
- Complete the following CHA_Ds2-VASc calculator to determine your personal risk.
- If you have AFib and a CHA_Ds2-VASc score of 2 or greater, you have an increased risk of stroke.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHA_Ds2-VASc RISK SCORE</th>
<th>If yes, add points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you have congestive heart failure?</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have high blood pressure or are you taking blood pressure medication(s)?</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you between 65–74 years of age?</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you 75 years old or older?</td>
<td>+2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you have diabetes?</td>
<td>+1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you ever had a stroke or TIA (mini-stroke)</td>
<td>+2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you ever had vascular disease (bypass surgery, heart attack, peripheral artery disease, or aortic plaque)?</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you female?</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MY TOTAL