

## Your Guide to Afib Treatment Options

Atrial fibrillation (also known as Afib) is a relatively common condition that causes an irregular heart beat in the human body. This is caused when the heart's atria (upper chambers) beat out-of-sync with the lower ventricles due to disorganized electrical signals sent from the heart.

It is estimated that Afib affects between 200,000 people in the United States each year, with symptoms ranging from chest pain and dizziness to fatigue and shortness of breath. It is important to note, however, that not all people suffering from Afib experience obvious symptoms. This is why it is so important to begin seeing a heart doctor for regular cardiac screenings and exams, ideally, around the ages of 40 to 50.

At Heart Rhythm Consultants, PA, Dr. Dilip Mathew, Dr. Antonio Moretta, and Dr. Rajesh Malik specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, and management of atrial fibrillation in Sarasota and the surrounding areas.

### Surgical Treatment Options for Afib

Depending on the severity of your Afib, there are a number of procedural treatment options that can improve your quality of life.

### Cardiac Catheter Ablation Procedures

A possible treatment/management option for patients with Afib is known as cardiac catheter ablation, a procedure which involves the placement of many small



wires (catheters) directly inside the heart. These wires are able to carry high-energy waves that gradually destroy the portions causing abnormal heart rhythm.

Dr. Mathew of Heart Rhythm Consultants, PA has performed more than 4,000 of these ablation procedures, which is one of the highest volumes of any doctor in the southeastern United States. No matter what treatment ends up being recommended for your specific case of Afib, our experienced and knowledgeable team of heart professionals is here to provide you with the best standard of care.

## **WATCHMAN**

For patients at higher risk of stroke, the WATCHMAN Device is used to reduce the likeliness of blood clots. The WATCHMAN Device is placed at the opening of the left atrial appendage. It attaches to the tissue of the heart through tiny anchors. After, the surface area facing the left atrium is minimized.

WATCHMAN is ideal for patients who do not meet the requirements for anticoagulation medication and want a long-term treatment option. Dr. Mathew is one of the first doctors in the area to offer WATCHMAN as a treatment option.

## **Cryoablation**

Different than the heat-based ablation method that has been used for years, the cryoablation procedure freezes the group of heart cells that are causing the heart to beat out of rhythm. This is a possible option when the medicated treatment of AFib is not working.

The procedure begins when a balloon catheter is inserted in the upper leg and a tube is inserted into your body until it reaches the heart. Cold energy is directed

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through the tube onto the troublesome heart tissue to freeze it, resulting in a normal heart rhythm following the procedure.

## **Pacemakers**

The implantation of a pacemaker device may be recommended to assist in regulating the heartbeat. Pacemaker is a relatively routine procedure that can be performed in our office. There are a number of different types of pacemakers that our doctors will review with you to determine which option is best for your needs. For example, there are both permanent and long-term pacemakers available. In most cases of patients with Afib, a permanent pacemaker is recommended.

## **Defibrillators**

An implantable cardioverter defibrillator device (ICD) could also be recommended as a means of providing life-saving therapy in the event that your heart beat were to become dangerously fast. This is done by delivering a controlled shock to the end of the tachycardia to prevent dangerous ventricular fibrillation. This device is inserted into the patient's chest directly, much like a traditional pacemaker.

## **Prescription Treatment Options**

For patients who are not ready or unable to explore surgical procedures, there are prescription options to help treat various heart rhythm conditions.

## **Beta Blockers and Calcium Channel Blockers**

In some patients, a simple treatment of a beta-blocker regimen can be effective in helping to slow the heart rate when it becomes too fast. The same applies to calcium channel blockers, which can suppress tachycardias when they occur or are



close to occurring. Both of these treatments are non-surgical and non-invasive, however they must be taken daily to be effective.

## More About Heart Rhythm Consultants, PA

Dilip J. Mathew, MD is board certified in Cardiology and Cardiac Electrophysiology. He has been practicing in the Sarasota and Tampa Bay and surrounding area for more than a decade. He is committed to helping patients manage their heart rhythm disorders with the best care. He has also received specific training in cardiology and cardiac electrophysiology at Brigham and Women's Hospital at Harvard. Dr. Mathew was also the first doctor to perform a left atrial appendage closure procedure in West Florida. Today, he has performed more of these procedures than any other doctor in the southeastern United States.

Antonio Moretta, MD is board certified in Internal Medicine, Cardiology, Clinical Cardiac Electrophysiology, and Echocardiography. Dr. Moretta joined Heart Rhythm Consultants ,PA in November 2018 after servicing the Huntington area for five years. Respectively, he received training in cardiology at Lenox Hill Hospital and Northshore University and in clinical cardiac electrophysiology at Stony Brook University.

**Rajesh Malik, MD FACC, FHRS** is Board Certified in Internal Medicine, Cardiovascular Disease, and Cardiac Electrophysiology. Dr. Malik joined Heart Rhythm Consultants, P.A. in February 2020 after servicing the Bradenton area. Respectively, he received training in cardiology and cardiac electrophysiology at the Medical College of Virginia.

If you have recently been diagnosed with atrial fibrillation, or if you're experiencing symptoms of this heart condition, do not put off seeing a doctor. Schedule an

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appointment with Heart Rhythm Consultants, PA. We're here to assist you in the diagnosis, treatment, and management of Afib for a healthier and fuller life.

***Call our office today to speak with a care coordinator: (941) 484-6758***

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