



If You Have Atrial Fibrillation:

Questions to Ask Your Doctor About Anticoagulant Medications for Stroke Prevention

To help you prepare to talk with your doctor about anticoagulant medications, the SecondsCount editors have compiled a short list of questions you may want to ask your doctor. We invite you to print this list and take it with you to your next appointment. It's always a good idea to take a family member or friend with you to appointments. They can help you take notes and remember what you learned.

If you have been recently diagnosed with atrial fibrillation, it is likely you have a number of questions to ask your doctor. If you and your doctor are considering anticoagulant therapy for stroke prevention, you may want to ask specific questions about how these medications will affect you. Some sample questions might include:

- **How often** will I have to take this medication?
- What **time of day** should I take it?
- What would happen if I **missed a dose**?
- What **side effects** can I expect?
- Will I need to have **regular tests to check how my blood is clotting**? How often? What would happen if I missed a test?
- If I cut myself will I **bleed too much**? Would cutting myself doing routine chores or activities (such as shaving) become a medical emergency?
- Can I drink **alcohol** while I'm on this medication?
- Are there **foods** I should avoid?
- What **other medications** can I take or not take?
- Should I wear a **medical bracelet** if I am taking this medication? What should it say?

Please print this list of questions. Take them with you to the doctor, and share them with friends and loved ones when you are encouraging them to see their doctors.