



Talking About Atrial Fibrillation (Afib)

- Most common type of heart arrhythmia seen in a family doctor's office
- More common with age
- More common in people with high blood pressure, thyroid problems, diabetes, or other heart disease
- Can lead to stroke, and increases stroke risk fivefold. Each year ~ 50,000 Canadians will have a stroke. For every ten strokes, two will recover, six will suffer permanent disability, and two will die
- Strokes are the leading cause of disability, and the third leading cause of death in Canada. Four out of five strokes are preventable

Helping Atrial Fibrillation Patients Understand Stroke Risk: The CHA₂DS₂-VASC Score

RISK FACTORS To assess risk, mark each box below that applies. Add up the total number to determine stroke risk.

CHF/LVD (congestive heart failure or left ventricular dysfunction)	High blood pressure (hypertension)	Age 75+ This increases your risk by two numbers.	Diabetes	Stroke/Thromboembolism History/TIA (transient ischemic attack) This increases your risk by two numbers.	Vascular disease PAD (peripheral artery disease), aortic plaque, or heart attack	Age 65-74	Female	Total Score
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Quality assurance in atrial fibrillation is related to the appropriate use of anticoagulation (blood thinners). Recommendations suggest a 0 score is 'low' risk and may not require anticoagulation; a 1 score is 'low-moderate' risk and should consider antiplatelet or anticoagulation, and score 2 or greater is 'moderate-high' risk and should be considered for anticoagulation.

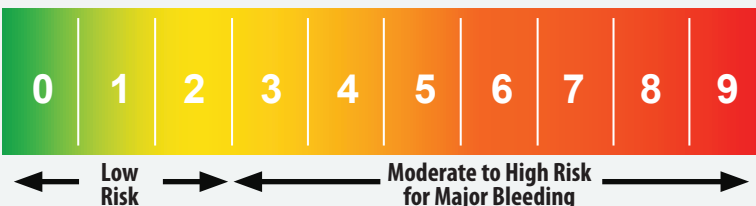
Talking About Bleeding Risk

- Many of the same conditions or factors that increase patient stroke risk also contribute to bleeding risk.
- The HASBLED score is an inventory of common bleeding risk factors and provides an opportunity to quantify and adjust bleeding risk of patients. Importantly, some of these risk factors may be reversible.

Helping Understand Bleed Risk: The HASBLED Score

RISK FACTORS To assess risk, mark each box below that applies. Add up the total number to determine bleed risk.

Hypertension (Uncontrolled, >160 mmHG systolic)	Abnormal Renal Function (Dialysis, transplant, Cr > 2.6 mg/dl or > 200 µmol/L)	Abnormal Liver Function (Cirrhosis, Bilirubin > 2x Normal, AST/ALT/AP > 3x Normal)	Stroke	Bleeding (History or predisposition)	Labile INRs (Unstable / high INRs)	Elderly (>65 years)	Drugs/Alcohol (Antiplatelet agents, NSAIDS)	Total Score
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Bleed Risk ≠ Stroke Risk. The risk of stroke is almost always higher than the risk of serious bleeding. Recommendations suggest a HASBLED score of less than 3 is 'low' risk for major bleeding; a score of 3 or more is 'moderate to high' risk for major bleeding. A HASBLED score of ≥ 3 warrants review of risk factors to determine if any are reversible (i.e. NSAID use).



Understanding Atrial Fibrillation and Stroke Prevention: The Top Five


4 out of 5 strokes are preventable

- 1. Risk of Stroke** - When you have atrial fibrillation (Afib), certain conditions or risk factors increase your chance of having a stroke. The more risk factors you have, the higher your chance of having a stroke. Check the list on the front page to see if you have ever had, or are being treated for any of these risk factors. This 'stroke risk' or 'CHA₂DS₂-VASC' score will help you better understand your risk of stroke if you are not on blood thinners. If your score is >1, you may be prescribed a blood thinner to help prevent stroke.
- 2. Blood Pressure Control** - Proper blood pressure control decreases your risk of serious bleeding by 50%. If you do have high blood pressure, take your medication as directed even if you feel good. Check your blood pressure regularly.
- 3. Risk of Bleeding** - In people with atrial fibrillation, your risk of stroke is almost always higher than the risk of serious bleeding. Many of the same conditions that put you at risk for stroke also contribute to the risk of bleeding. Factors that increase your risk of bleeding are: age greater than 65 years, high blood pressure, history of a stroke, previous serious bleeding, liver problems, kidney problems, increased alcohol intake, or taking Aspirin or anti-inflammatory drugs like Ibuprofen or Naprosyn. Your doctor may be able to help you reduce your risk of bleeding by advising on some of these conditions.
- 4. Blood Thinning Medication** - If you already take blood thinners for your atrial fibrillation it is important to remember to take them at the proper time(s) of the day, don't miss doses, don't double your dose if you forget, store your medication properly and take with food if needed. If on warfarin (Coumadin), get your blood work checked regularly.
- 5. Other Medications** - If you are taking blood thinners, use caution with anti-inflammatory medications like Aspirin or Naprosyn which can increase your risk of bleeding. Taking Aspirin can double your risk of bleeding. Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions.

If you have Atrial Fibrillation, a blood thinner may be recommended to reduce your risk of stroke. Talk to your doctor or healthcare practitioner to see which blood thinner is right for you.

What You Need to Know About Your Blood Thinner Treatment:

✓ Importance of treating with a blood thinner	✓ Availability of reversal agents
✓ When/how to take your blood thinner	✓ Common side effects
✓ Monitoring requirements	✓ Dietary restrictions (if any)
✓ Risk/benefit of blood thinner treatment	✓ Potential drug interactions
✓ Situations where a blood thinner may need to be reversed (i.e. medical emergency)	✓ Importance of adhering to treatment

Discover more educational resources at www.thrombosiscanada.ca