Natural AFib Treatment Options to Consider

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Natural Treatment for Atrial Fibrillation: What Are My Options?

If you've recently been diagnosed with atrial fibrillation (or AFib, as you'll commonly hear this condition called) you may be scared. Your cardiologist has probably put you on a multitude of medications, from aspirin, to beta-blockers, to anti-arrhythmic medications, to blood thinners, and they may have also discussed various surgical procedures to fix the abnormal rhythm.

You know AFib is nothing to mess with; the risk of not treating AFib appropriately is blood clots and stroke. The various treatments your cardiologist has recommended are more than likely necessary to prevent these scary complications, but there may be other complementary therapies that can be added to conventional therapy to help treat your AFib.

These non-pharmacologic approaches should be discussed with your physician. The therapies discussed are absolutely not meant to replace any medication prescribed by your doctor, who has prescribed a medication in your best interest, knowing your health history and current condition.

Yoga

Yoga and breathing exercises for atrial fibrillation could be beneficial. A study performed at the University of Kansas hospital found that regular yoga sessions decreased the amount of AFib episodes by about 45% in the 49 patients participating in the study.

These patients were still on anticoagulant therapy and anti-arrhythmic therapy — yoga did not get rid of AFib, but it did decrease the symptoms associated with their conditions. However, due to the small sample size, further research is needed to quantify the results.

Supplementation

Deficiencies in electrolytes can cause heart arrhythmias. Supplementing with the appropriate minerals as necessary can possibly prevent AFib from happening. For example, some doctors may agree that taking magnesium and calcium supplements could be beneficial.

Avoid or Limit Caffeine

Caffeine can speed up the heart rate, which can cause an abnormal heart rhythm. Avoiding products with caffeine, such as coffee, soda, caffeinated teas, guarana and yerba mate may help to prevent AFib. On a similar note, stimulant drugs and stimulant herbs (substances that can increase your heart rate) should also be avoided. Talk to your doctor before taking any kind of stimulant over-the-counter drugs, such as certain cough and cold medicines.

Avoid or Limit Alcohol

Consuming alcohol can also trigger abnormal hearth rhythms. Make sure to consult with your physician regarding the consumption of alcohol and your AFib.

Manage Stress

Stress can contribute to AFib and it can also make it worse. Managing your stress is probably the number one thing you can do for your AFib, besides taking your medications as prescribed by your doctor; fortunately, it also happens to be a natural treatment for Atrial Fibrillation.

As previously discussed, yoga may have a direct effect on reduction of AFib symptoms. This may be because it decreases stress in some people. Meditation and relaxation techniques are also effective ways to cope if you are feeling stressed. Another common and popular way to reduce stress is by experiencing the endorphin releasing effects of exercise. Even if fitness is relatively new to you, there are plenty of simple and straightforward exercise options you can choose from, for example, going for a walk, hike or jog. However, make sure to check with your doctor before making any modifications to your exercise routine, as your personal health and any medications you are taking may need to be considered. Apart from the activities mentioned, sometimes even connecting with friends and family or making time for hobbies you enjoy can be great avenues to relieve your stress. Keep in mind though that everyone is unique, and what may work for others may not work for you. You may need to experiment a bit to find out what the best ways to relieve stress are for you.

Diet, Weight and Exercise

Maintaining a healthy diet and getting regular exercise is also very important for those with AFib; this can facilitate not only weight loss, but also reduce stress levels, which can help regulate blood pressure and may help reduce the symptoms of Atrial Fibrillation.

The AFib and Mental Health Connection

Although research is still being done, there may be a direct correlation between AFib and levels of depression and anxiety. It appears that those affected by AFib may have a greater risk of being affected by these mental health conditions.

If you have depression or anxiety, using tactics to control your symptoms is key. However, there is no shame in seeking assistance from your doctor, a psychiatrist or a licensed therapist if needed. Depression and anxiety are multifaceted; it can affect not just your AFib, but also your entire body and overall health.