Enjoying Thanksgiving with Atrial Fibrillation

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Top Tips for Thanksgiving with Atrial Fibrillation

Thanksgiving is just around the corner. You are excited because you'll have some time off work and can spend time with your family and friends, but you may also feel concerned that your AFib will act up. Luckily, there are a few things you can do.

Be Safe

For some people, AFib will never cause a problem. For others, complications can lead to serious health issues such as strokes or heart attacks. Don't ignore the warning signs of these things. If you experience dizziness, very low energy, troubles breathing, the feeling that your heart is often skipping a beat or chest pain, see your doctor right away.

Use Technology to Your Advantage

It's normal to experience more stress during the holidays. You may have some time off work, but there are so many things to do: you may want to cook, and invite people over for dinner. A quick and easy solution is right in your hand – use your phone!

Do you want to cook but feel stressed about how and what menu to choose? There are plenty of easy-to-use apps for that! For example, Chow Thanksgiving Dinner Coach includes nine easy traditional Thanksgiving recipes.

There are also plenty of smartphone apps for AFib that can help you out during your party. Do you want to keep your guests entertained with a game at your party? Use the Turkey Hunt Thanksgiving Dinner app or Word Spree: Thanksgiving Lite app. Are there any kids of the party? They will love the Thanksgiving Match app.

Eat Well

You need to eat healthy most of the time – a low sugar, low salt, low saturated fat, low calorie, clean diet is important to manage AFib, as well as preventing diabetes and high blood pressure. It may be a bit harder, but not impossible to stick to your healthy choices during Thanksgiving.

Turkey is a good choice of lean meat, just be sure to choose turkey breast versus other parts of the bird. Make sure you have some vegetables on the side, as well. The sweets can be tempting, but don't overdo it. – have small portions when it comes to cake and cookies, and complete your dessert with fruits, nuts and seeds.

A glass or two of wine are okay if your condition is stable, but don't drink to excess, as it can cause heart rhythm disturbances. The same rule applies to coffee and other drinks that contain caffeine - drink them in moderation.

Remember Your Meds

Take your medication as prescribed and always have some extra doses in your purse or coat pocket, just in case you are away from home for longer than expected.

Also keep in mind that anticoagulant drugs can interfere with some foods. For example, if you take the drug warfarin, it can interact with alcohol, green tea, mango and soy products. You doctor likely gave you the list of foods you should avoid while taking certain drugs. If you go to a party, make sure you ask the host about the ingredients used in the menu.

Happy Thanksgiving!