

Bob's A-Fib Journey

The first incident of A-Fib was in 1998. I had just retired the year before at age 58 and moved to Chicago to be more active in a meditation group I belong to. It was a hot summer day and I took a shower (warm to hot) and stepped out of the shower into a cold a/c room. My heart rate suddenly jumped to above 100... perhaps 125 but it is hard to count when it is that high.

A doctor friend gave me *digoxin* and it quickly reverted. But over the next few weeks I got the same symptoms again and went into a heart clinic and had an EKG. It was A-Fib.

Over the following several years I got A-Fib off and on and each time it reverted within 24 hours. But last year 2010, in the fall I noticed my heart rate jumping once or twice a month. By this time I was on *flecainide* 100mg once a day and *diltiazem* 180mg once a day to control pulse rate and BP.

I am a vegetarian for the last 33 years, at 6'2" and weighing 183-190 I'm not overweight, and I exercise regularly – sometimes on a mountain bike pushing it as fast as it will go for 15 miles or so. Pretty good for 72 years old who often is told "you look like 62."

This Jan 2011 I started getting A-Fib almost constantly. I'd revert for 1-2 days and then go back in again. I saw my electrophysiologist and we agreed on doing a cryogenic ablation procedure for early February.

While I was waiting for the procedure I recalled that last year I had been taking a herbal remedy, an over the counter heart formula. I had run out and stopped taking it as last fall approached. My intuition told me it might have something to do with the increasing incidence of A-Fib. I found some in the house and started taking the pills again. Within a week the A-Fib reverted. Then a few days before I was to go into the hospital for the pretest I got a box with two more bottles and a booklet on the formula.

I had read that the two amino acids arginine and Taurine might stop heart arrhythmias. This peaked my interest since it matched my own intuition. So I googled A-Fib and Taurine and got a research paper.

I also, considered doses of Omega-3 essential fatty acids.

We searched for nutrient deficiencies that could cause cardiac arrhythmias [premature atrial contractions (PACs), premature ventricular contractions (PVCs), atrial fibrillation, and related sinus pauses], and found literature support for deficiencies of taurine and L-arginine. Case histories of people with very frequent arrhythmias are presented showing 10 to 20 grams taurine per day reduced PACs by 50 percent and prevented all PVCs but did not prevent pauses. Adding 4 to 6 grams of L-arginine immediately terminated essentially remaining pauses and PACs, maintaining normal cardiac rhythm with continued treatment. Effects of taurine useful in preventing arrhythmias include regulating potassium, calcium and sodium levels in the blood and tissues, regulating excitability of the myocardium, and protecting against free radicals damage. Taurine restored energy and endurance in one of the cases from a debilitated status to normal. Arrhythmias may also respond to taurine because it dampens activity of the sympathetic nervous system and dampens epinephrine release. L-arginine may have anti-arrhythmic properties resulting from its role as a nitric oxide (NO) precursor and from its ability to restore sinus rhythm spontaneously. Endogenous production of taurine and L-arginine may decline in aging perturbing cardiac rhythm, and these "conditional" essential nutrients therefore become "essential" and require supplementation to prevent morbidity and mortality. L-arginine is hypothesized to prevent cardiac

arrhythmias by NO stabilization of the sinus node. Cardiac arrhythmias having no known cause in otherwise healthy people are hypothesized to be symptoms of deficiencies of taurine and arginine.

I printed out the PDF, read it and then cancelled the ablation procedure.

It has been ~ 10 weeks now with no A-Fib. Well that could be a fortuitous coincidence because there have been lots of 10 week periods without A-Fib before.

BUT I have always had PVCs too. And when I start exercising in the spring on my bike, it is common for me to get as many as 2 or 4 missed beats. As I would get back in shape the PVCs would go down and end up at 2-3 per 100 beats.

The research paper says that PVCs are reduced by the two amino acids as well. When I check my pulse rate I count to 100 without PVCs. Very rarely I have noticed one PVC.

So that's my story... Bob's A-Fib journey.

I hope this is helpful to others... I am special since I am in such great shape to start with. Perhaps others might not fair so well.

But as a vegetarian I am close to Furhman's diet 'Eat to Live' which seems to help many common health issues such as diabetes type II.