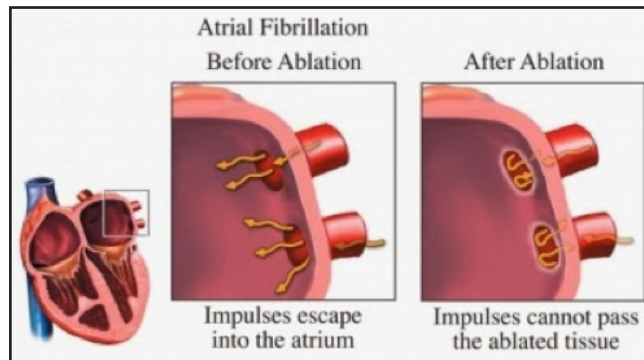


Atrial Fibrillation

Atrial fibrillation is the most commonly sustained cardiac arrhythmia. The number of patients with AFib continues to grow and many treatment options are available. Patients with AFib can be extremely symptomatic or have no symptoms at all. Some patients have few spells a year, while others have many spells a week or are even in AFib all the time. These are the factors that will determine what option is the best one for you.

We now know that in the majority of patients, AFib is triggered by abnormal impulses originating in the pulmonary veins. These impulses will go into the left atrium and trigger the arrhythmia.

Patients who are symptomatic with AFib can be treated with medications. If drugs fail, there are other options, such as Atrial fibrillation ablation.



Atrial fibrillation is often caused by abnormal electrical activity coming from the pulmonary veins. AFib ablation is a procedure used to block these impulses by ablating either with heat or cold energy. After ablation the abnormal electrical impulses can't go into the heart and cause AFib.

AFib ablation

Atrial fibrillation ablation is a procedure aimed at eliminating AFib triggers. This is accomplished by ablating at the ostium (or the mouth) of the pulmonary veins. The goal is to electrically isolate the veins – while there is still blood flow, the abnormal electrical signals in the veins can't go to the heart anymore. In order to achieve that, we can either use radio frequency energy or cold energy to deliver a balloon via catheter (cryoballoon ablation).

AFib ablation and X-ray exposure

AFib ablation is typically performed using fluoroscopy (X-ray image) and a 3D mapping system. High exposure to X-ray can be detrimental, and it may even cause cancer or blood disorders. At St. Vincent's Birmingham, we perform AFib ablations using minimal or even no fluoroscopy at all. Most procedures at our center use about 30-40 seconds of fluoroscopy, while in most centers across the country use more than 30 minutes for each case.

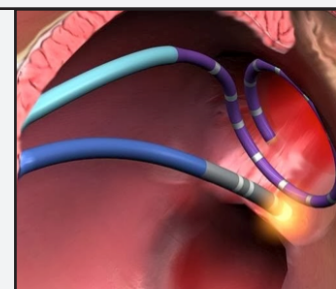
More than 300 procedures have been performed using this novel technique at St. Vincent's Birmingham.

Atrial fibrillation ablation is a great option for patients whose quality of life is affected by AFib.

Written by Jose Osorio, MD

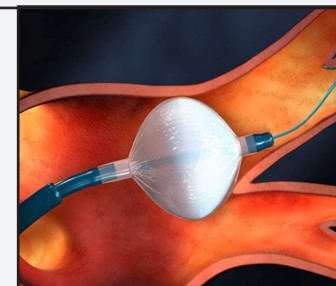
RADIO FREQUENCY ABLATION OF THE PULMONARY VEINS:

Ablation catheter is positioned at pulmonary vein, and ablation is performed by heating the tissue. Ablation is guided by a circular catheter called Lasso.



CRYOBALLOON ABLATION OF THE PULMONARY VEIN:

The cryoballoon is positioned at the pulmonary vein, and ablation is performed by getting the tissue around the vein down to very cold temperatures. AFib ablation is the best option for patients who have failed or have not tolerated medications. Ablation is the only treatment option that could cure AFib.



2660 10th Avenue South
POB 1, Suite 101
Birmingham, AL 35205
1-855-STV-BEAT or
205-939-7936
Fax: 205-939-7935
Email: Heart@stvhs.com
Website: stvhs.com/afib