



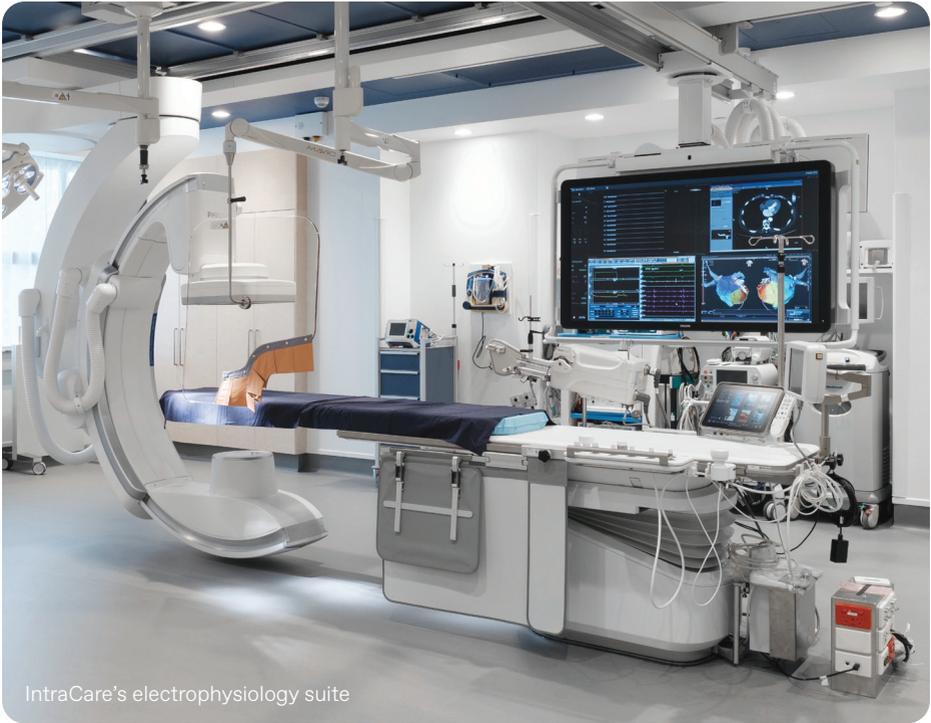
YOUR GUIDE TO

# Atrial Flutter / CTI Ablation



**IntraCare**

Electrophysiology



IntraCare's electrophysiology suite

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# About this procedure

This guide provides information about an atrial flutter ablation procedure. It includes information about what is involved, how to prepare and what to expect during and after this procedure. Please use this in addition to information from your doctor and nurse.

An atrial flutter ablation (sometimes referred to as a CTI ablation – CavoTricuspid Isthmus) is performed in an electrophysiology (EP) suite at IntraCare in Epsom. Your cardiologist will be assisted by our team of nurses and other highly skilled personnel.

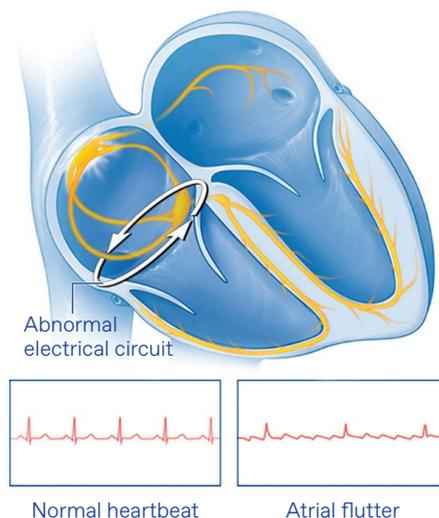
Both IntraCare and Allevia Hospital will be involved with your care for this procedure. Allevia Hospital are responsible for your admission, preparation and aftercare in the Cardiac Investigation Unit (CIU).

## What is atrial flutter?

Atrial flutter is usually a very regular arrhythmia and may result in rapid heart rates. This heart rhythm disturbance is caused by an electrical short circuit in the top chamber of the heart (atria).

The most common form (typical atrial flutter or CTI flutter) is a single short circuit that conducts electrical impulses rapidly around the heart valve which lies between the right atrium and right ventricle (tricuspid valve). During atrial flutter, the atria do not contract properly, but rather flutter quickly resulting in blood being pumped less effectively.

### Typical atrial flutter



## Why do I need an atrial flutter ablation?

Atrial flutter affects the rate at which the heart beats. People with atrial flutter may experience symptoms such as palpitations, shortness of breath, light-headedness and fatigue. If these symptoms are impacting your quality of life, then a flutter ablation may help.

This arrhythmia can often be difficult to treat with medication and even when it is asymptomatic, may lead to heart muscle weakening or failure. There can also be a risk of blood clots forming in the atria as they are not contracting effectively.

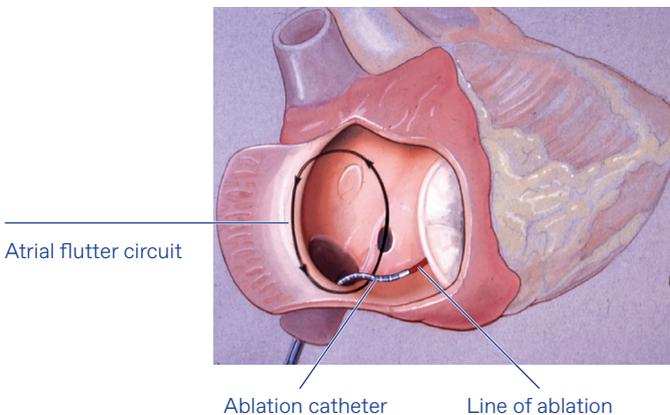
Following this procedure, you may be able to stop taking some heart medications, as advised by your cardiologist. If your heart muscle has weakened from the flutter, it may also recover over time.

## What is an atrial flutter ablation?

Radiofrequency ablation is where an electrode catheter is placed in the heart and radiofrequency energy is delivered to cauterise a small area of tissue.

An atrial flutter ablation is a procedure to create scar tissue within the right atrium (top chamber) of the heart. The ablation catheter is placed on the target area (cavo-tricuspid isthmus or CTI) and radiofrequency energy is delivered into the tissue. This creates scar and causes a line of block across the abnormal electrical circuit that is causing the atrial flutter.

**Typical atrial flutter**



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# Before your procedure

## Pre procedure phone call

A nurse from IntraCare will call you 24–48 hours prior to your procedure to discuss the following information:

- Your admission time.
- When you should stop eating and drinking.
- Medication instructions.
- Allergies (including medications, contrast dye, dressings/plasters and food).
- Answer any further questions.

## Anticoagulation (blood thinner)

You will be prescribed a blood thinning medication by your cardiologist prior to the procedure if you are not taking one already e.g. Dabigatran (Pradaxa), Rivaroxaban, Warfarin or Clexane. **It is very important to NOT miss any doses of your blood thinner for 1 month prior to your atrial flutter ablation.** Please contact IntraCare if you have any questions about this.

## On the day (important anticoagulation instructions)

- If you are taking Pradaxa/Dabigatran, please take this as usual on the morning of your procedure.
- If you are taking Rivaroxaban, skip the morning dose on the morning of your procedure. If you normally take this at night, take your dose as usual the night before the procedure.
- If you are taking Warfarin, please continue to take this as usual. Our nurses will monitor your INR levels and advise any medication changes if necessary.

## Other regular medications

Please continue to take these unless advised otherwise by your cardiologist. If you are taking a diuretic or water pills (e.g. frusemide, spironolactone), you may need to withhold this on the morning of the procedure.

## Reminders for the day of your procedure

- If you are on regular medication, please bring this with you in its original packaging.
- Please leave all your jewellery and valuables at home. You are welcome to bring your mobile phone in with you.
- We recommend wearing loose-fitting clothing and shoes that are easy to slip on/off.
- You are encouraged to bring a friend or a family member as a support person before and after your procedure.
- This is commonly a day stay procedure, but please bring an overnight bag with you in case you are required to stay overnight.
- The planned procedure time is an estimate only and may vary. We will keep you informed of any unexpected delays on the day.

## Informed consent

As with any procedure, there are potential risks involved. Your cardiologist and anaesthetist will explain the procedure, discuss possible risks and answer any questions you may have. Your whānau or support person are welcome to be part of this discussion. You will then be asked to sign the consent form. This will occur either at an earlier appointment, or on the day of your procedure.

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## Your procedure

An atrial flutter ablation (CTI) procedure is performed under general anaesthetic and usually takes 1–1.5 hours.

### Preparation

Once you are in the EP suite, the staff will perform a safety check-in to confirm your name, date of birth and the procedure you are having. A small intravenous (IV) line will be inserted into a vein in your arm for medication to be injected.

We may need to remove hair with clippers at the access site for sterile preparation. Please avoid shaving the area yourself as this may cause minor abrasions to the skin, increasing the risk of infection.

Several adhesive patches, small and large will be placed on your back and chest for monitoring and 3D mapping if required. Other devices for monitoring blood pressure, heart rate and oxygen levels will be fitted to ensure your safety during the procedure. We will carefully position and tuck your arms at your sides to ensure that sterility and safety are maintained.

## The procedure

Atrial flutter ablations are performed under general anaesthetic. Once you are asleep, an anti-septic solution will be applied to the groin area to clean the skin. Following this, two or three small, hollow tubes (sheaths) will be inserted into the vein at the top of the leg (groin). Using X-ray guidance and sometimes 3-dimensional mapping, electrode catheters are then advanced up into the right atrium of the heart via the sheaths in the vein. The ablation is then performed to create a line of block across the electrical circuit that is causing the atrial flutter.

A 30-minute wait time is observed after the ablation, to ensure the ablated tissue does not recover. Once the procedure is complete, the catheters and sheaths are removed from the vein.

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## After your procedure

You will be transferred from IntraCare to CIU, where the Allevia Hospital team will look after you during your recovery. The nurses will monitor your progress, and if appropriate, you will be discharged home after 4–6 hours. Prior to your discharge, the nurses will provide instructions on medication, procedure site care, and resuming your usual daily activities.

### Recovery and discharge

- Following your procedure, it is important that you **do not drive for 48 hours**. Please ensure you have a family member or friend to drive you home from the hospital, as you may still be under the effects of anaesthesia or sedation.
- You will need to arrange someone to be at home with you on the day of your discharge and overnight to support you in your recovery.
- Due to the general anaesthetic, you may feel lethargic afterwards with reduced concentration. For this reason, for 24 hours after your procedure:
  - Do not do any activity requiring strength, concentration, or full alertness.
  - Do not make any legal decisions or sign legal documents.
- You may feel discomfort in the throat where the breathing tube was placed. This discomfort should improve over the next couple of days. You can take a lozenge to relieve the pain.
- Due to the nature of ablation, it is common to experience some chest discomfort for a few days.
- For a few weeks after your ablation, you may experience, occasional skipped heart beats or brief palpitations. These symptoms are common and will decrease with time.

## Resuming activities

- You will be able to return to work within a week of having the procedure unless your job involves heavy lifting (>5kg).
- You can begin light exercise after 1 week.

## Medication

- You will need to continue taking your blood thinning medication (anticoagulant) e.g. dabigatran/pradaxa or rivaroxaban for at least 1 month following your procedure. Your cardiologist will discuss this with you in more detail.
- Your cardiologist will discuss any medication changes with you, if necessary. If you have any questions regarding your medications after your procedure, please contact your cardiologist.

## Follow up appointment

You will be seen in clinic at The Heart Group approximately 1–3 months following your atrial flutter ablation. If you have minor concerns prior to your follow up appointment, please arrange to see your general practitioner (GP) or contact IntraCare.

## Femoral (groin) site care

It is normal to experience some bruising at the puncture site. During the first few days after your procedure:

- Do not do any heavy lifting (>5kg) or strenuous exercise.
- Try not to excessively cough, sneeze, or strain as this puts pressure on the puncture site which may cause it to bleed.
- Do not sit in a bath, hot tub or spa. This reduces the possibility of bleeding or infection.
- Do not cross your legs while sitting.
- You may resume walking if your puncture site is not painful.
- If applicable, remove the dressing on your groin once the skin has healed (approximately 3 days).

## Haematoma

A haematoma is a collection of blood under the skin that is sometimes painful. A small hard lump (similar in size to a pea) may also be felt under the skin and remain for several weeks:

- If a large lump (haematoma) occurs, lie down, and get another person to press down firmly on the centre of the haematoma for approximately 10 minutes.
- If after releasing pressure, the haematoma reoccurs, keep applying the pressure and go to your local accident and emergency department.

## Bleeding

- It is common for there to be a small amount of ooze. If this occurs, re-apply a sticking plaster and lightly press for a few minutes.
- If there is significant bleeding, you should lie flat, and another person will need to apply firm pressure for 10 minutes. If this does not stop the bleeding, you will need to call an ambulance.

**Seek immediate medical attention (dial 111 for an ambulance) if there is excessive bleeding from the puncture site or if you are experiencing severe chest pain.**

Please take this booklet and your discharge summary with you if visiting the GP, afterhours or hospital.

**If you have any concerns after your procedure, please contact IntraCare:  
Monday to Friday: 09 630 1961 (between 6:30am and 6:00pm).  
For after-hours, weekends, and public holidays, contact 027 482 0763.**

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# How to find us

## IntraCare Epsom

Both IntraCare and Allevia Hospital will be involved with your care for this procedure.

**When you arrive, please report to the Allevia Hospital reception desk (number 1 on the map).**

First Floor, Allevia Hospital Reception  
98 Mountain Rd, Epsom, Auckland 1023

P: +64 9 630 1961 (Monday to Friday 6:30am–6:00pm)

P: +64 27 482 0763 (after hours, weekends and public holidays)

E: [admin@intracare.co.nz](mailto:admin@intracare.co.nz)

W: [intracare.co.nz](http://intracare.co.nz)

## Where to park

A 10 minute patient ‘drop off zone’ is available on the level 1 carpark. Head up the ramp as you enter into the carpark from the Main Entrance on Mountain Road.

The first 30 minutes are free and apply only once the vehicle licence plate number has been entered into a payment terminal. Patient parking is available on all levels of the car park. Parking limits apply, and parking spaces are marked (P90, P180, and All Day Parking).

The Allevia Hospital parking is managed by a separate company, and a fine may be issued if your vehicle breaches any of the parking terms and conditions.

There is free 120 minute parking available nearby on Mountain Road, Gilgit Road and Almorah Road after 9am.



 Main entrance to patient and visitor car park  
- 250 spaces

 Walkway to main reception  
Pedestrian access to main reception from car park

- 1** Allevia Hospital reception and Allevia Radiology 1 reception
- 2** Canopy Cancer Care
- 3** ARO (Auckland Radiation Oncology)
- 4** Allevia Café and outdoor dining courtyard
- 5** Allevia Pharmacy
- 6** IntraCare
- 7** Awanui Labs (blood tests)
- 8** Allevia Radiology 2 (CT, ultrasound)
- 9** The Heart Group
- 10** Allevia Radiology PET-CT Canopy Cancer Care
- 11** Allevia Specialist Centre
- 12** Allevia Radiology 1 (MRI/X-ray)
- A B C D E** Allevia Specialist Centre entrances



# IntraCare

Intra Limited

E: [admin@intracare.co.nz](mailto:admin@intracare.co.nz)

W: [intracare.co.nz](http://intracare.co.nz)

P: +64 9 630 1961 (Monday to Friday 6:30am–6:00pm)

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