

# Fish oil supplements have little effect on irregular heartbeat

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High doses of fish oil supplements, rich in omega-3 fatty acids, do not reduce atrial fibrillation, a common type of irregular heartbeat in which the heart can beat as fast as 150 beats a minute. The results of the AFFORD trial led by the Montreal Heart Institute were published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* on October 7th.

For the trial, 337 patients with [atrial fibrillation](#) not receiving conventional antiarrhythmic therapy were randomly assigned to 4 grams of fish oil a day or to placebo for up to 16 months. 64.1 % of patients who had received fish oil experienced a recurrence of atrial fibrillation compared to 63.2 % of those taking placebo. Furthermore, the study concluded that [fish oil supplements](#) did not reduce inflammation or oxidative stress markers, which may explain its lack of efficacy.

"Fish oil has no role in the rhythm-control management of atrial fibrillation," said lead investigator Dr. Anil Nigam, Cardiologist at the Montreal Heart Institute and Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Montreal. "What is well-known and should be recommended to prevent heart disease and reduce blood pressure is a Mediterranean-type diet rich in natural omega-3 fats and other nutrients, including fresh fruits and veggies, legumes, olive oil, while lowering intake of red meat, trans fats and saturated fats. We believe that such a strategy might also be beneficial for the treatment of atrial fibrillation although more studies are required."

Provided by Montreal Heart Institute

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