



Important steps that you can take now to prevent another heart attack

“I had a lot of worries about my heart and my life after my heart attack.

Discussing questions with my doctors and the cardiac rehab team helped me feel more confident and become more active.”



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This booklet has been designed with input from heart doctors, family doctors, and patients like you from across Ontario.

“I’ve met people at cardiac rehab sessions and they know what it’s like to be in my position.

I’ve learned from others at cardiac rehab and hopefully sharing what I’ve learned along the way can help others at rehab too.”



Introduction

This booklet, and others that you receive over the next year, were designed to help you recover and improve your health and quality of life. Each booklet is different, and following the steps can help you on your new, heart-healthy path that will lead you to your best possible recovery. To help you along the way, we have included quotes we have heard from patients just like you.

What is cardiac rehab?

Your routine activities are usually not enough to help your heart get strong. The cardiac rehabilitation program is free and is adjusted to each person depending on their needs and abilities. It will include:

- Testing for how your heart is recovering,
- Education about being heart healthy,
- Supervised exercise,
- A personalized plan.

Rehab programs are flexible — make your appointment and speak with the rehab team to arrange a program that's right for you. This might be new to you, but this is a normal process that everyone should go through after a heart attack.



Your treatment plan is key!

Your doctor wants you to talk to them about how you are feeling and about any concerns you may have. Write down your questions so that you don't miss anything. Space is provided at the end of this booklet to help you keep everything in one place.

You can learn more about heart treatments, including medications and exercise at: heartandstroke.ca/treatment.



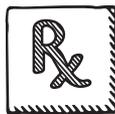
Step 1: Choose your path

Pretend like nothing happened...

I WILL NOT make changes to my daily living.

Plan for my 'new normal'...

I WILL make small changes to live a longer, healthier life.



I will fill my prescription – OR –
I have already filled my prescription



I will take the right pills every day



I will make an appointment for cardiac
rehabilitation – OR – I have already
started rehab and will continue going

-----> “I’m already too set in my ways and want to pretend like nothing happened.”

-----> “My heart attack scared me, but I feel good knowing that my pills and my cardiac rehab are helping me avoid another attack. Now I also spend more quality time with my family.”



Step 2:

Understanding cardiac rehabilitation

“I just feel good to be able to exercise. It makes me feel healthy and feel good overall.”



Research shows...

People who do exercise-based cardiac rehab have a 25% lower risk of dying in the first year after their heart attack. Cardiac rehab is also known to improve overall quality of life, reduce stress, and increase your ability to take part in your usual activities.



Things you should know about “rehab” for your heart

1. Rehab saves lives

Studies show that people who do not attend are at greater risk of future heart problems and even death.

2. Rehab means doing more than your usual activities

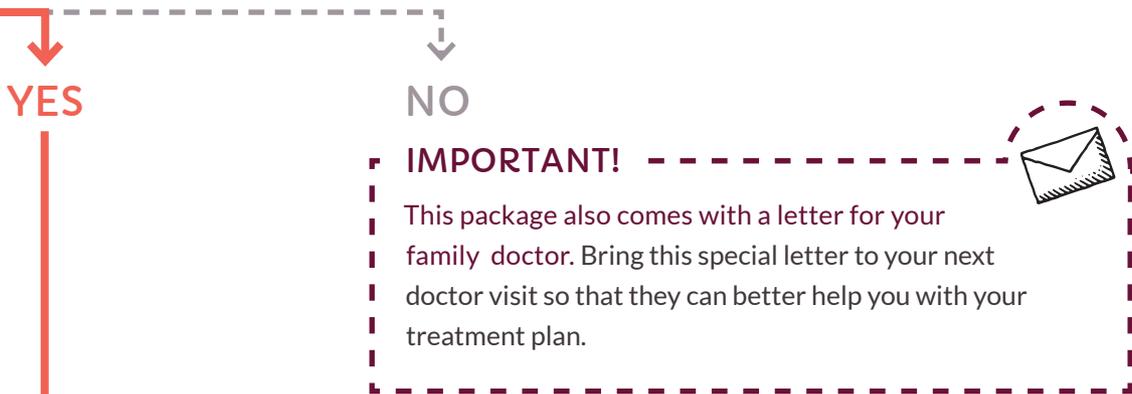
Many people are unsure how much or what types of exercise are right for them. Cardiac rehabilitation is the place you go to get those answers and more. You cannot get the benefits of rehab without going to the program to learn what your body needs.

3. Rehab is adjusted for your needs and strengths

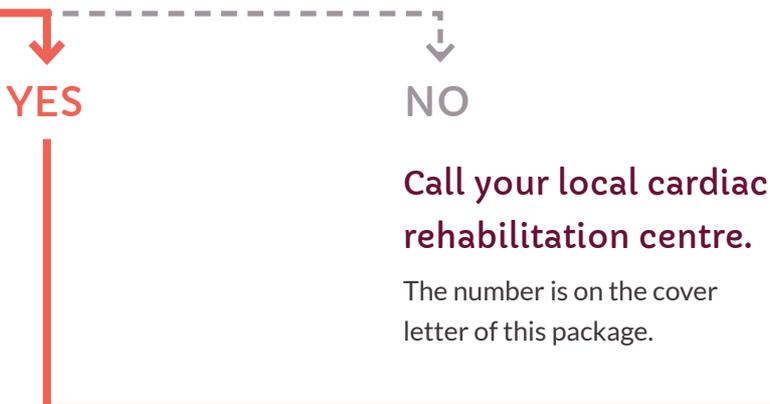
No matter how much activity you can do right now, rehab can benefit you and your heart, because the program will be personalized for you.

Step 3: Getting started - - - -

Has a rehab referral been made by your doctors?



Has your rehab appointment been made?



- → with cardiac rehab

Did you attend your cardiac rehab appointment?

↓
YES

Keep it up!
People who complete their entire cardiac rehab program gain the most benefit to their heart.

↓
NO

Most people can find ways to overcome the challenges related to taking part in cardiac rehab.

Call your local cardiac rehab centre to discuss your concerns. They will help you get started in a way that will work for you.

The number is on the cover letter of this package.

Step 4: Take your pills

If you haven't filled your prescription, it's not too late!

If you're already taking your pills, good for you! Go to page 13.

Those who do not continue their treatments cannot benefit from pills that are proven to help keep people healthy, live longer, and stay out of hospital.

We know that life can get busy. Making a clear plan will help you remember to fill/refill your prescription. Answer some of the questions below to put your plan in order:

When will you take your pills?

Example: In the morning and in the evening

When: _____

Where will you take your pills?

Example: In the kitchen

Where: _____

How will I remember to take my pills?

Example: Use a daily pill box and/or a reminder app on my smartphone

How: _____

Just like filling your prescription, making a plan for taking your pills every day and filling your refills when you need to is a simple but powerful way to help yourself. Have a look at the booklet that you filled about 1 month ago...

Are you following your refill plan?

↓
YES

Do you have any questions about your plan?

↓
NO

Not to worry! Now's your chance to adjust or make a new refill plan.

Where will I get my refills?

Example: Pharmacy name, phone, address

Where: _____

When will I get my refills?

Example: When I have one week left in my pill box

When: _____

How will I get to the pharmacy?

Example: Drive, call a friend, get my pills delivered

How: _____

Please turn over 

Step 5: Take questions to --

→ Questions for your rehab team

You might have questions about your new heart-healthy path. Some questions can be answered by your cardiac rehab team. To give you an idea, here are some examples of things concerning other patients. Write down your questions and call or speak to your rehab team in person.

Example: How much weight can I carry?

Example: Can I shovel snow?

Example: Does usual walking count as heart-healthy exercise?

Example: How often do I really need to exercise?

My Rehab Centre's Info:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

My Doctor's Info:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

- → a healthcare professional

Questions for your doctor

Take a moment to discuss any questions you may have for your doctor with your loved ones. Write it all down and bring this list to your next doctor's appointment.

Example: Is it possible to change my prescriptions so I can take all my pills at the same time each day?

Example: When I'm due for a new prescription, is there an easy way to make sure I don't run out?



Don't forget!

This package also comes with a letter for your doctor. Your doctor may not have the latest information from your hospital. Bring this special letter to your next doctor visit so that they can better help you with your treatment plan.



This booklet has been designed with input from heart doctors, family doctors, and patients like you from across Ontario. The Heart and Stroke Foundation is also proud to be a collaborator on this project.

In the coming months you will receive some more information about things you can do on your new heart-healthy path.



Month 1

Goal Setting, Pill Taking & Refills

Month 2

Cardiac Rehabilitation

Month 5

Bringing the Plan Together

Month 8

Keeping Up with your Plan

Month 11

Revisiting Goals,
Exercise is Medicine