



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

“It definitely hasn’t been easy all the time, but it’s been almost a year since my heart attack and I’m proud of the changes I’ve made. Sure I fall off track sometimes, but then my family reminds me of what’s most important.”



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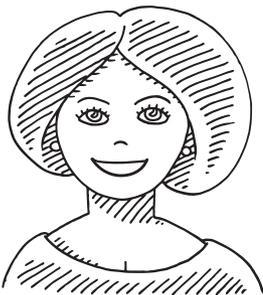


This booklet has been designed with input from heart doctors, family doctors, and patients like you from across Ontario.

Introduction

This booklet, and others that you received over the last year, were designed to help you recover and improve your health and quality of life. Whether or not you actually feel the treatments working, we know that following your treatment plan is the best thing you can do to take control of your heart-health. To help you along the way, we have included quotes we have heard from patients just like you.

It's important that you keep going with these steps. You can use this booklet as a reference guide in the months and years to come to make sure that you're on your new, heart-healthy path that will lead you to your best possible recovery.



Your treatment plan is key!

Talk to your doctor about how you are feeling and any concerns you may have. Write down your questions so that you don't miss anything.

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



Step 1: Choose your path

Pretend like nothing happened...

Plan on living my 'new normal'...

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



I will continue to take my pills each day



I will continue to refill my prescriptions



I will complete my cardiac rehabilitation
– OR – I have already finished and will
continue to exercise

Step 2: Continue to -----

Take your pills everyday!

If you're already taking your pills, good for you! Skip this page.

Find a way to make taking your pills part of you daily routine. Writing down your plan is a simple but powerful way to create this healthy habit, even if you have already started taking your pills.

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: _____

- → take your pills

To take your pills properly, you need a plan to ensure you always have enough. Research shows that actually writing down your plan is a simple but powerful way to help yourself stay on track. If you made a plan in a previous booklet, you can update it here.

Are you following your refill plan?

Now's your chance to adjust or make a new refill plan if you need to.

Where will I get my refills?

Examples: 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?

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

How: _____

Step 3: Continue with -----

“I had trouble walking so my doctor encouraged me to exercise in the water. I felt really uncomfortable at first because I don’t like going to the pool and wearing a swimsuit, but the more I did it, the easier it got. I am really starting to enjoy it now.”

If you haven’t started with cardiac rehabilitation, ask your doctor for a referral. If you have, make a plan to finish! Whether or not you are already exercising, making a plan can help you turn your goals into a healthy routine:

Where will I exercise?

Examples: At the gym; at the rehab centre

Where: _____

When will I exercise?

Examples: Which days and what time each day?

When: _____

How will I get to the exercise facility?

Examples: Drive myself; call a friend to get a ride; take the public transit

How: _____

- → your plans to exercise

How will I stay on track?

Check all that apply

- Mark it on my calendar
- Ask a loved one to remind me
- Use an alarm clock / phone alarm / reminder app
- Get a pedometer to count my steps
- Enjoy a reward when I complete my planned exercise each month
- Other: _____
- Other: _____
- Other: _____



Exercise is medicine!

Exercise can improve the way you feel and your quality of life no matter what other conditions you have.

Research suggests that people who get 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week get the greatest benefits for their heart.



Step 4: Make a Plan B

Even the best-laid plans can be sidetracked. Planning ahead can help you stay on track. Below are some reasons why other people have fallen out of their treatment routines and **things they did to get back on track**. Choose the **situations** that **might affect you** and **draw a line** to a **solution** or write one that works for you. Research shows that drawing a line can make a real difference, so please grab a pen and take a few minutes to complete this section.

Situation: If I...

Solution: Then I will...

...Am running out of pills

- Call my doctor as soon as possible to arrange a refill
- Ask my pharmacy to fax the doctor for a refill

...Can't get to my pharmacy when it's open

- Call my pharmacy about delivery options
- Switch to a pharmacy with longer hours

...Will be travelling

- Write down a plan before I go for when and where I will take my pills when I am away
- Put a reminder in my calendar

...Am concerned about side effects

- Keep taking my pills but discuss with my doctor
- Remind myself of how my pills help keep my heart healthy even if I feel better

...Am tempted not to exercise because I am too busy

- Think about how another heart attack could affect people who are close to me
- Find someone who can encourage me to exercise
- Tell myself that I am being good to myself by taking care of my body in this way
- Think about how I will be a better role model for others if I did more exercise

...Don't feel well enough to exercise

- Talk to my doctor about changes to my health
- Recall that exercise often helps me feel better
- Remind myself that some exercise is better than none

Add your own personal situations here: **Add your own solutions here:**

Step 5: Got Questions?

Questions for your health care professional

Take a moment to discuss any questions you may have with your loved ones. You may have questions for your doctor/pharmacist/rehab team. Write it all down and bring a list to your next appointment.

Example: How long do I take my pills for?

Example: Are there certain types of exercise I should avoid?

Example: Are there ways to make following my treatment easier?



“It’s been a while since my heart attack and I wasn’t sure what exercise I should be doing, so I spoke with my doctor and now I have a plan that works for me...”

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.



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

It's been about one year since your heart attack and we hope you're recovering well! You've made it this far so make sure you keep going and live your "new normal" just as planned.