



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

“It’s been a long road already. I have good days and bad days, but I’m proud of myself for pushing through and keeping on track with my plan—even with my busy life!

I’m starting to notice that I’m feeling more energetic overall and I’m more able to do the things I enjoy.”



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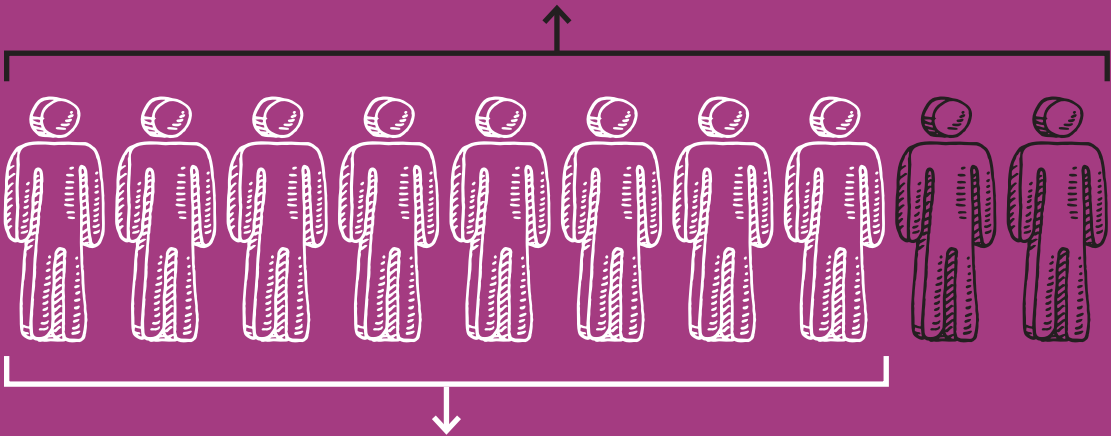
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This booklet has been designed with input from heart doctors, family doctors, and patients like you from across Ontario.

10 out of 100 people

will die in the first year
after their heart attack...



8 can be saved with proper treatment

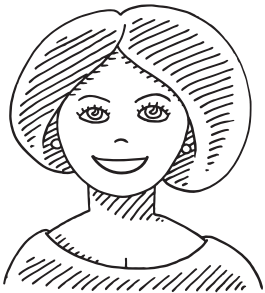
(pills and cardiac rehab)

In addition to living longer, preventing heart attacks, and reducing chest pains, research shows that people who complete exercise-based cardiac rehab can get these benefits:

- Better overall quality of life
- Lower stress levels
- Better mood and energy levels
- Improved relationships
- Ability to do enjoyable activities
- Better understanding of heart health
- Increased feelings of control over health

Introduction

This booklet, and others that you receive over the next several months, were designed to help you recover and improve your health and quality of life. Some people start to feel better and then believe they do not need treatment any longer. But people who have had a heart attack are most likely to have another. Following the steps in this booklet can help you stay 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.



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.



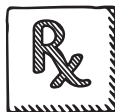
Step 1: Choose your path

Pretend like nothing happened...

I WILL NOT make changes to my daily living.

Plan on living 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.”

-----> “If I want to be here and I want to look after my family and myself, I’ve got to plan to do it and just do it.”



Step 2: Continue with your

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 detailed plan can help you turn your goals into a healthy routine:

Where will I exercise?

Example: At the gym; at the rehab centre

Where: _____

When will I exercise?

Example: Which days and what time each day?

When: _____

How will I get to the exercise facility?

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

How: _____

- → cardiac rehab plan

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: _____



Some people worry about getting to and from the centre, appointment timing, or feeling sore after exercise.

Please call the centre and tell them if you have worries like this. Rehab can be personalized to fit your life. A flexible, home-based option might also be available for you.



Step 3: Continue to -----

Take your pills everyday, and plan ahead to refill your prescriptions

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

Find a way to make taking your pills part of your 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?

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: _____

Step 4: Make a Plan B

“I have a lot of appointments to keep track of, so to help me remember, I asked the rehab program to give me a reminder phone call, and that has really helped me stay on track and continue my heart exercises like I planned.”



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 unsure when my appointment is

- Call my doctor's office to check
- Call my local cardiac rehab program

...Can't get to my cardiac rehab program

- Ask if home-based options are available
- Ask a friend / loved one for help

...Am tempted not to go to cardiac rehab because I am too busy

- Ask for a more flexible schedule of appointments
- Think about the impact another heart attack could have
- Find someone who can encourage me

...Am concerned that cardiac rehab is not right for me

- Remember that the program can and will be customized for me and my abilities
- Recall that supervised exercise helps no matter how much I exercised before
- Think about how I will be a better role model for others by going to cardiac rehab

...Don't feel well enough to exercise

- Call the cardiac rehab program to ask for advice about how to change my exercise
- Talk to my doctor about changes to my health
- Remind myself that some exercise is better than none

Add your own personal situations here:

Add your own solutions here:

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: _____

- → 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?

My Doctor's Info:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

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