

Have you a problem with your heart?

Perhaps cardiac rehabilitation is for you

Below is a chart outlining the process of cardiac rehabilitation following a heart attack, a diagnosis of acute coronary syndrome, heart surgery or an angioplasty and what it involves.

Admission to hospital

Before leaving hospital you should be offered:

- Information on how to improve your lifestyle, for example on smoking cessation, physical activity (including sex), diet, alcohol, and employment from a member of the cardiac rehabilitation team or ward nurse
- Effective medication and information about how to use it - the benefits, and possible side effects
- A written invitation to attend a cardiac rehabilitation programme.

Weeks 4-10 following your heart event you should:

- Be attending a cardiac rehabilitation programme
- Have a physical activity programme tailored to meet your individual needs
- Have access to health professionals for advice and support about exercise, healthy eating, smoking cessation, relaxation, anxiety or depression, your medication and work
- Continue to take the tablets that were prescribed at discharge. During this time you may have a follow up with your specialist who may review your tablets and alter them if necessary.

Week 10-12 onwards you should be:

- Continuing to take your tablets
- Having long term follow up with your GP
- Considering getting involved with your local cardiac club
- Be referred to specialists should you require further support, for example to stop smoking, change your diet, weight management or feelings depression
- Maintain the positive changes you made in the cardiac rehabilitation programme and make new ones if necessary.

You can benefit from cardiac rehabilitation if you:

- Have heart disease, such as angina, or acute coronary syndrome or if you have had a heart attack
- Have had a coronary artery bypass operation or an angioplasty.

Cardiac rehabilitation can make a difference to you and your family. The evidence for attending cardiac rehabilitation is compelling. People who attend cardiac rehabilitation have:

- An improved quality of life
- Less chance of having another heart attack
- Less chance of being readmitted to hospital for heart problems
- Less chance of complications
- Less chance of dying from another cardiac event.

If you did not get an invitation to attend a cardiac rehabilitation programme while in hospital, don't worry.

Ask your general practitioner or practice nurse for a referral to your nearest programme or contact

The National Heart Foundation of New Zealand
PO Box 17-160,
Greenlane, Auckland, 1130.
Ph: 09 571 9191
www.heartfoundation.org.nz

No matter how difficult it seems, your hard work in cardiac rehabilitation will have a lifetime of heart health benefits