

Cardiac rehabilitation

A patient's guide

What is it?

Cardiac rehabilitation is designed to help you get back to enjoying life after your heart procedure or surgery.

It usually includes exercise sessions and advice on lifestyle including healthy eating and relaxation techniques. It aims to restore you to as full a life as possible.

It will also help rebuild your confidence and is good fun to do.

Why is it important?

Clinical guidelines recommend taking part in a cardiac rehabilitation programme after a heart attack or heart procedure.

Research studies have shown that people who attend cardiac rehabilitation are able to do more, feel more confident and lead a healthier lifestyle than those who do not attend.

It is possible to improve how well your heart works and to reduce your risk of having another cardiac event.

What programmes are available?

There are three main options available after your procedure:

1. Papworth in-house
2. Local hospital
3. Road to recovery home based

1. Papworth in-house programme

This rehabilitation programme is based at Papworth Hospital. It lasts for 12 weeks but you only need to attend the hospital once a week for the first six weeks, then carry on at home for the following six weeks. You will then have a final review during the twelfth week.

Although during the first six weeks you will be attending rehabilitation sessions in the hospital, there will be a strong emphasis on establishing a home routine. A DVD of the exercises is available. The staff will offer you support and advice to help you achieve this.

2. Local hospital

Most local hospitals will offer an in-house cardiac rehabilitation programme or a home based option. Access to these programmes varies widely across the region. Where there

is no local hospital or home based programme available, the Papworth Road to Recovery Outreach Service will be offered.

3. Road to recovery

The Road to Recovery Cardiac Rehabilitation Programme has been designed for people who live too far away to attend regularly as an outpatient or for those patients that are better suited to a home programme for domestic or work reasons. It may be based at your local centre or at Papworth hospital.

It is a home-based course with an exercise DVD, relaxation CD and a programme diary. It requires your commitment to do the exercises at least three times a week and to do the home study. The programme will last for 12 weeks, but you only need to attend the hospital once for an initial assessment.

During this assessment your fitness and recovery will be assessed. You will be provided with the equipment you need and a clear explanation of the programme.

The rehabilitation staff will telephone you each week to monitor and discuss your progress and to answer any questions that you may have. You will have a final telephone review at week 12.

Taking part

We would strongly recommend that you attend a cardiac rehabilitation programme as an important part of your treatment.

A physiotherapist or cardiac rehabilitation nurse will forward your details to the appropriate programme. The programme will not start for a number of weeks, to allow you time to continue increasing your fitness. You will then be contacted directly by that programme with an appointment.

If you have any queries or concerns during the early weeks of your recovery or have not heard from a cardiac rehab team within two weeks of discharge, please contact the Papworth Cardiac Rehabilitation Team.

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