

Healthy heart at home

Patient education instructions for recovery



**Ascension
Saint Thomas
Hospital**

Transcatheter aortic valve replacement

Your recovery care instructions

After your aortic valve is replaced, you will spend a few days in the hospital. This will help you get your energy back and make sure you are ready to go home.

Most people can return to regular activities in two or three weeks. Your doctor may give you specific instructions on when you can do your normal activities again.

This care booklet gives you a general idea about how long it will take for you to recover. But each person recovers at a different pace. Follow the steps to feel better as quickly as possible.



How can you care for yourself at home?

Activity

- Rest when you feel tired.

Diet

- Eat a heart-healthy diet. If you have not been eating this way, talk to your doctor. You also may want to talk to a dietitian. He or she can help you learn about healthy foods.
- If your bowel movements are not regular right after the procedure, try to avoid constipation and straining. Drink plenty of water. Your doctor may suggest fiber, a stool softener, or a mild laxative.

Medicines

- Your doctor will tell you if and when you can restart your medicines. He or she will also give you instructions about taking any new medicines.
- If you take blood thinners, such as warfarin (Coumadin), clopidogrel (Plavix), or aspirin, be sure to talk to your doctor. He or she will tell you if and when to start taking those medicines again. Make sure that you understand exactly what your doctor wants you to do.
- Your doctor will likely prescribe blood-thinning medicines. Be sure to get instructions about how to take your medicine safely. Blood thinners can cause serious bleeding problems.
- Be safe with medicines. Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine.

Other

- Be sure to tell all of your doctors and your dentist that you have an artificial aortic valve. This is important because you may need to take antibiotics before certain procedures to prevent infection.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results, and keep a list of the medicines you take.

Cardiac rehabilitation

When should you call for help?

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You passed out (lost consciousness).
- You have symptoms of a heart attack. These may include:
 - Chest pain or pressure, or a strange feeling in the chest
 - Sweating
 - Shortness of breath
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Pain, pressure or a strange feeling in the back, neck, jaw or upper belly, or in one or both shoulders or arms
 - A fast or irregular heartbeat

After you call 911, the operator may tell you to chew one adult-strength or 2-4 low-dose aspirins. Wait for an ambulance. Do not try to drive yourself.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You are bleeding from the area where the catheter was put in your artery.
- You have a fast-growing, painful lump at the catheter site.
- You have signs of infection, such as:
 - Increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness
 - Red streaks leading from the catheter site
 - Pus draining from the catheter site
 - A fever
- Your leg or arm looks blue or feels cold, numb or tingly.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if you have any problems.

Where can you learn more?

Go to healthwise.net/patientEd. Enter P870 in the search box to learn more about "Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement: What to Expect at Home."

Your recovery care instructions

Cardiac rehabilitation is a program for people who have a heart problem, such as a heart attack, heart failure, or a heart valve disease. The program includes exercise, lifestyle changes, education and emotional support. Cardiac rehab can help you improve the quality of your life through better overall health. It can help you lose weight and feel better about yourself.

On your cardiac rehab team, you may have your doctor, a nurse specialist, a dietitian and a physical therapist. They will design your cardiac rehab program specifically for you. You will learn how to reduce your risk for heart problems, how to manage stress, and how to eat a heart-healthy diet. By the end of the program, you will be ready to maintain a healthier lifestyle on your own.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results, and keep a list of the medicines you take.



How can you care for yourself at home?

Medicines

- Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine. You will get more details on the specific medicines your doctor prescribes.

Diet

- Weigh yourself every day if your doctor tells you to. Watch for sudden weight gain. Weigh yourself on the same scale with the same amount of clothing at the same time of day.
- Plan your meals so that you are eating heart-healthy foods.
- Eat a variety of foods daily. Fresh fruits and vegetables and whole-grains are good choices.
- Limit your fat intake, especially saturated and trans fat.
- Limit salt (sodium).
- Increase fiber in your diet.
- Limit alcohol.

Activity

- Learn how to take your pulse so that you can track your heart rate during exercise.
- Always check with your doctor before you begin a new exercise program.
- Warm up before you exercise, and cool down afterward for at least 15 minutes each. This will help your heart gradually prepare for and recover from exercise, and avoid pushing your heart too hard.
- Stop exercising if you have any unusual discomfort, such as chest pain.

Do not smoke. Smoking can make heart problems worse. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines. These can increase your chances of quitting for good.

When should you call for help?

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You have severe trouble breathing.
- You cough up pink, foamy mucus and you have trouble breathing.

- You have symptoms of a heart attack. These may include:
 - Chest pain or pressure, or a strange feeling in the chest
 - Sweating
 - Shortness of breath
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Pain, pressure or a strange feeling in the back, neck, jaw or upper belly, or in one or both shoulders or arms
 - Lightheadedness or sudden weakness
 - A fast or irregular heartbeat
- You have angina symptoms (such as chest pain or pressure) that do not go away with rest or are not getting better within five minutes after you take a dose of nitroglycerin.
- You have symptoms of a stroke. These may include:
 - Sudden numbness, tingling, weakness or loss of movement in your face, arm or leg, especially on only one side of your body
 - Sudden vision changes
 - Sudden trouble speaking
 - Sudden confusion or trouble understanding simple statements
 - Sudden problems with walking or balance
 - A sudden, severe headache that is different from past headaches
- You passed out (lost consciousness).

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have new or increased shortness of breath.
- You are dizzy or lightheaded, or you feel like you may faint.
- You gain weight suddenly, such as more than 2-3 pounds in a day or 5 pounds in a week. (Your doctor may suggest a different range of weight gain.)
- You have increased swelling in your legs, ankles or feet

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if you have any problems.

Where can you learn more?

Go to healthwise.net/patientEd. Enter D709 in the search box to learn more about "Cardiac Rehabilitation: Care Instructions."

Learning about cardiac rehabilitation

What is it?

Cardiac rehabilitation (rehab) is a program for people who have a heart problem. It teaches you how to be more active and make other lifestyle changes. These can lead to a stronger heart and better health.

Why is cardiac rehab done?

- Cardiac rehab can help you get better after being in the hospital for a heart problem or heart surgery. It may help you to:
 - Lower your risk of a heart attack or dying from heart disease.
 - Prevent more heart problems if you're at high risk for heart disease or a heart attack.
 - Stay out of the hospital.
 - Build your strength. This can help increase the amount of activity you can do.
 - Manage your symptoms. These may include chest pain, shortness of breath, and fatigue.
 - Manage other health problems. These include high blood pressure and high cholesterol

Rehab may also help you to:

- Go back to work safely and sooner.
- Feel more hopeful. You may feel less depressed, stressed or worried.
- Get support from your rehab team and other patients in rehab.
- Have more energy and return to your usual activities.
- Resume your sex life.
- Have a heart-healthy lifestyle. This includes being active, eating healthy foods, losing weight, and not smoking.

What are some types of cardiac rehab?

Cardiac rehab programs can be done in an office, a clinic, or your home. These programs usually include:

- Close supervision. This happens during the early part of your exercise program.
- Education and counseling for you and your family. This can help you build healthy habits. These habits will lower your risk of having more heart problems.
- Helping you prepare to get back to work and the activities you enjoyed before your heart problems. You may need to adjust your work or leisure activities.
- Taking care of your emotional health. You can get help for depression and improve your emotional well-being.
- Making a plan to help you start a safe exercise program at home.

What does a cardiac rehab team do?

In cardiac rehab, you work with a team of health professionals. The team may include a doctor, a nurse specialist, a dietitian, an exercise therapist, and a physical therapist. They design a program just for you, based on your health and goals. They also give you support to help you succeed.

What happens before you start cardiac rehab?

Before you start cardiac rehab, your doctor will check your heart health to see what types of exercises you can safely do. Tests may include electrocardiograms and echocardiograms. You may also have tests during rehab. They will help your doctor see how you are doing.

Where can you learn more?

Go to healthwise.net/patientEd. Enter C375 in the search box to learn more about "Learning About Cardiac Rehabilitation."



Care for a healthy heart

Your recovery care instructions

Heart disease occurs when a substance called plaque builds up in the vessels that supply oxygen-rich blood to your heart. This can narrow the blood vessels and reduce blood flow. A heart attack happens when blood flow is completely blocked. A high-fat diet, smoking and other factors increase the risk of heart disease.

Your doctor has found that you have a chance of having heart disease. You can do lots of things to keep your heart healthy. It may not be easy, but you can change your diet, exercise more, and quit smoking. These steps really work to lower your chance of heart disease.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

Diet

- Use less salt when you cook and eat. This helps lower your blood pressure. Add only a little salt when you think you need it.
- Eat fewer snack items, fast foods, canned soups, and other high-salt, high-fat, processed foods.
- Read food labels and try to avoid saturated and trans fats. They increase your risk of heart disease by raising cholesterol levels.
- Limit the amount of solid fat-butter, margarine and shortening you eat. Use olive, peanut or canola oil when you cook. Bake, broil and steam foods instead of frying them.
- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables every day. Dark green, deep orange, red or yellow fruits and vegetables are especially good for you. Examples include spinach, carrots, peaches and berries.
- Foods high in fiber can reduce cholesterol and provide important vitamins and minerals. High-fiber foods include whole-grain cereals and breads, oatmeal, beans, brown rice, citrus fruits and apples.
- Eat lean proteins. Heart-healthy proteins include seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, beans, peas, nuts, seeds and soy products.

- Limit drinks and foods with added sugar. These include candy, desserts and soda pop.

Lifestyle changes

- If your doctor recommends it, get more exercise. Walking is a good choice. Bit by bit, increase the amount you walk every day. Try for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week. You also may want to swim, bike or do other activities.
- Do not smoke. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about programs and medicines to increase your chances of quitting for good. Quitting smoking may be the most important step you can take to protect your heart.
- Limit alcohol to two drinks a day for men and one drink a day for women.

Medicines

- Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine.
- If your doctor recommends aspirin, take the amount directed each day. Make sure you take aspirin and not another kind of pain reliever, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol). If you take ibuprofen (such as Advil or Motrin) for other problems, take aspirin at least two hours before taking ibuprofen.

When should you call for help?

Call 911 if you have symptoms of a heart attack. These may include:

- Chest pain or pressure, or a strange feeling in the chest
- Shortness of breath
- Pain, pressure or a strange feeling in the back, neck, jaw or upper belly, or in one or both shoulders or arms
- Lightheadedness or sudden weakness
- A fast or irregular heartbeat

After you call 911, the operator may tell you to chew one adult-strength or 2-4 low-dose aspirins. Wait for an ambulance. Do not try to drive yourself. Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if you have any problems.

Where can you learn more?

Go to healthwise.net/patientEd. Enter F075 in the search box to learn more about "A Healthy Heart: Care Instructions."



Ascension Saint Thomas Hospital

Cardiac Health and Rehabilitation

4220 Harding Pike

Nashville, TN 37205

t 615-222-2008

ascension.org/tennessee

Information retrieved from:
2006-2020 Healthwise, Incorporated. Care instructions adapted under license
by your healthcare professional. If you have questions about a medical condition
or this instruction, always ask your healthcare professional. Healthwise,
Incorporated disclaims any warranty or liability for your use of this information.