HOME EXERCISE GUIDELINES

Regular exercise will help you regain your strength as well as help control your risk factors for heart disease. It is important to continue activities such as walking when you go home from the hospital.

Follow the guidelines provided, so your activity can be safe and effective for your heart. As any other muscle in your body, your heart also needs activity to keep it strong. If you do not exercise, you become very weak, making it difficult to complete daily activities. If you do too much, you run the risk of damaging your heart.

Our goal is to return you to your greatest physical, mental, social, emotional and work level. If you need more instruction in the area of activity or exercise, contact your doctor or a cardiac rehab program in your area. Our staff can help you find a rehab program close to your home.

When you are in better physical shape, physical tasks put less stress on your heart. Exercise may delay or prevent conditions related to diabetes, such as arterial blockages in the feet and legs, stroke and heart attack.

It is important to follow the exercise program explained to you If you had a heart attack or heart surgery, you may need to limit your activity for the first 4 weeks or until you see your doctor. **Talk to your doctor before starting aerobic exercise or a more aggressive exercise program.**

EXERCISE GUIDELINES

- Get regular rest.
- Exercise at a comfortable pace. You should be able to carry on a normal conversation while you walk.
- Start with shorter walks in the house and then go outside near your home where the ground is flat.
- In bad weather, you may walk at malls or other indoor areas.
- Avoid outside exercise if the temperature is below 30 degrees or above 80 degrees.
- It is best to exercise 1 to 2 hours after eating or prior to a meal.

Exercise for People with Diabetes

Because exercise often lowers blood sugar, it can place a person with diabetes at risk for hypoglycemia (low blood sugar). Hypoglycemia can occur unexpectedly during exercise or up to several hours after exercise. Discuss with your doctor the range for your blood sugar during exercise.

- Exercise at the same time each day, preferably 1 to 2 hours after eating a meal, to reduce the chance of low blood sugar and prevent added strain on the cardiovascular system.
- Check your blood sugar before and after exercise to prevent low blood sugar. If your blood sugar is greater than 300 mg/dl, do not exercise. If you exercise when your blood sugar is above 300, it may increase. If your blood sugar is consistently above 240, you must check with your doctor before you continue with your exercise program.
- If your blood sugar is less than 100 mg., eat one fruit or one starch exchange (four ounces of fruit juice or three graham crackers) before exercising. Blood sugars should be maintained at 80 to 140 mg. while exercising.
- Drink plenty of water before, during and after exercise.
- Inject insulin into your abdomen rather than into an exercising area (arm or leg) to prevent hypoglycemia.
- Do not exercise outdoors if the temperature is below 30 degrees (with wind chill factor) or above 80 degrees (with humidity).
- Avoid prolonged lifting unless you have your doctor's permission because it raises the pressure in the eyes.
- A pulse increase of more than 20 to 30 beats per minute (10 to 15 if you are taking a beta blocker) above your resting pulse is a signal that you are exercising too intensely. Slow your walking pace or pedaling speed.
- If your resting heart rate is above 100 beats per minute, check with your doctor before continuing with your exercise program.
- Be sure to follow the guidelines given to you with your Home Exercise Guidelines and discharge instructions.

Aerobic Exercise

Aerobic exercise means that oxygen is needed for the activity. The body supplies this oxygen by increasing the amount of blood in the heart, the heart rate and the breathing rate. Activity that uses larger muscle groups and can be continued nonstop at an elevated heart rate is considered an aerobic exercise.

Aerobic exercise improves the function of the heart and can help decrease risk factors such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure and can aid in weight loss. Examples of aerobic exercise are walking, running, swimming, cycling, cross-country skiing and aerobic dance.

Benefits of aerobic exercise may include:

- Decreased resting blood pressure, resting heart rate, cholesterol and triglycerides
- Increase in HDL ("good" cholesterol)
- Decrease and stabilize blood sugar (may reduce the amount of insulin or oral medicine needed by the person with diabetes)
- Weight loss
- Reduction in stress
- Improved feeling of well-being
- Improved muscle strength
- Decreased clot formation

If you experience any of these signs and symptoms with activity, STOP AND REST.

WARNING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Chest pain, pressure, tightness, burning, with or without radiation into arms, neck, back, jaw or throat
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Abnormal heartbeats
- Excessive sweating
- Extreme fatigue

WARM-UP

The first 5 minutes of your exercise should be done slowly. To start your warm-up, you may do the warm-up exercises pictured in your booklet or start walking slowly.

EXERCISE

Begin slowly walking or freewheeling exercise bike for the desired minutes. Do not take "brisk" walks until you can walk 30 minutes continuously without symptoms or fatigue. Exercise at a pace that does not take your pulse over 20 beats more than it was at rest.

Walking: Walk at a leisurely pace... not a brisk walk.

Other Equipment: Wait until given okayed from your doctor or cardiac rehab specialist before using any exercise equipment. Do not use any resistance on the exercise equipment.

COOL DOWN

The next step in your exercise program includes a slower paced activity to bring your heart rate and blood pressure back to a resting level. Do not forget this part of the activity. Cool down by gradually slowing your pace or by repeating the cool-down exercises. Take 3 to 5 minutes to take some slow deep breaths and relax.

GOALS

Evidence indicates that patients who complete Phase II Cardiac Rehab Programs are more successful in controlling risk factors.

A good cardiovascular exercise goal would be to walk or exercycle for 30 minutes (walk 1 to 2 miles; cycle 5 to 6 miles) at your new prescribed heart rate (pulse) at least 3 times per week. 5 days per week recommended.

It is important to maintain an active lifestyle in addition to regular cardiovascular exercise. Such as:

- Add a few steps to your day
- Park further away
- Take stairs instead of elevators
- Take the dog for a walk

THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF A LIFELONG COMMITMENT TO EXERCISE.

Remember that recovery from a major cardiac event takes time. It is common for patients to leave the hospital feeling tired, uncomfortable, depressed and having interrupted sleep patterns.

Concentration may seem difficult during activities like reading the newspaper and watching television. It is normal to experience one or all of these symptoms during your recovery, but they should subside with time.

It will take time for you and your family to adjust to the changes in your lifestyle. Be patient with yourself and each other. If you get tired, stop your activities and rest. Exercise according to the guidelines in this book and eat properly to promote healing.

Using common sense in your self care will be a key element in your recovery. Call your doctor or cardiac rehab specialist if you have questions or concerns.

HOW TO CHECK ACTIVITY TOLERANCE

A method for monitoring exercise tolerance is by using the rate of perceived exertion (RPE) scale. When rating your perceived exertion consider your leg fatigue, ease of breathing and overall body feeling of fatigue. When you exercise at low intensity, you should feel like you are 11 to 13 on the scale. When you exercise at high intensity, you should feel like you are 13 to 15 on the scale.

If you ever feel like you are working harder than 15, you should decrease your workload or slow your walking pace.

In addition to the rate of perceived exertion scale and counting your pulse, there are other symptoms that tell you that you may not be tolerating a particular activity well.

These symptoms include:

- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Any symptoms of angina
- Prolonged fatigue
- Irregular heartbeats
- Profuse cold sweating
- Nausea

If you experience any of these signs and symptoms with activity, STOP AND REST.

Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) Scale	
6	
7	Very, Very Light
8	
9	Very Light
10	
11	Fairly Light
12	
13	Somewhat Hard
14	
15	Hard
16	
17	Very Hard
18	
19	Very, Very Hard
20	