

Cardiac Rehab—What You Need to Know

Helping you recover from a cardiac event, whether it's a heart attack or cardiac surgery, is one of our main goals. Although some people find that the recovery process can be long and frustrating, most people find that enrolling in an outpatient cardiac rehab program can really help.

- *What is cardiac rehab?*
 - Cardiac rehab is an exercise program specific to heart patients during which heart rhythms, blood pressure, and heart rate are all monitored in order to ensure your safety.
 - Cardiac rehab programs also help you learn more about healthy lifestyle habits, stress reduction, and nutrition.

- *When should I start cardiac rehab?*
 - Every person is different—you may start as early as a week after you leave the hospital, or may need to wait for several weeks to give your body time to heal and recover. Scheduling and insurance checks usually means starting 1-2 weeks after contacting a cardiac rehab program.

- *How long is cardiac rehab?*
 - It takes time to make changes to your health, and most cardiac rehab programs last for several weeks, depending on your need. For the biggest benefit you should go at least 3 days a week.

- *How much does cardiac rehab cost?*
 - Cardiac rehab is a medical program and most, or all, of the cost is often covered by insurance. Co-pays or prior authorizations will be checked before you begin.

- *What do I need to begin?*
 - To enroll, your regular cardiologist will write a referral which you can take to the program closest to you. If your cardiologist does not have their own referral form, get in contact with the cardiac rehab program directly, and they can send the forms to your doctor.

- *Where do I go for cardiac rehab?*
 - Talk to your care team. MedStar has facilities across the Maryland/DC area and your care team can tell you more about the program(s) closest to you.

- *What if I have never exercised before?*
 - Don't worry. The point of cardiac rehab is to introduce you to regular exercise in a safe and fun environment. Over time, you'll be able to exercise more as you get healthier and more confident in yourself.

- *What if I already exercise regularly?*
 - Cardiac rehab is different than going to the gym. Cardiac rehab programs make sure that you're exercising at the appropriate intensity before you begin exercising on your own.