

# NORTHSIDE HOSPITAL

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## HEART INSTITUTE



## Cardiac Rehabilitation

An Educational and  
Lifestyle Tool for Physical  
Activity and Heart Health

 EXCELLENCE AT HEART



# Cardiac Rehabilitation

Cardiac Rehabilitation is a customized and medically supervised outpatient program of exercise, education, counseling, and behavior modification. The goal is to strengthen your heart, improve your physical, mental, and social health, and reduce the risk of future cardiac health events.

This booklet contains general recommended guidelines for actions following a heart attack. However, these recommendations may differ for some patients.



## Recovering After a Heart Attack

Recovering from a heart attack takes time. Rest is important, but it's just as important for you to participate in recreation and social events and to begin making physical activity a part of your daily life.

### After leaving the hospital, it is generally safe to:

- Cook
- Wash dishes
- Do laundry
- Go to the store
- Do light office work
- Shower
- Take short car rides
- Walk on flat, sturdy surfaces

### Avoid these activities:

- Heavy cleaning
- Vacuuming
- Driving
- Lifting over 10-15 lbs
- Raking leaves
- Washing the car
- Mowing the grass
- Pushing/pulling heavy objects

### Follow Up With Your Cardiologist

Be sure to follow up with your cardiologist 1-2 weeks after your discharge from the hospital as instructed. During the visit, talk with your doctor about when you can increase your activity. Your doctor will discuss your progress, and ask if you've started a cardiac rehab program.

### Get Moving

Walk at a leisurely pace on a flat, sturdy surface once or twice a day (unless your doctor says otherwise).

Make sure to dress comfortably and walk:

- In the morning and evening (avoid the hottest time)
- Indoors during extreme temperatures (i.e. shopping mall or local gym)
- Before eating or wait 1 hour after eating

## Living After a Heart Attack

Most people can return to normal daily activities after a heart attack, but how quickly depends on your health, previous activity level, and the condition of your heart.

### Eating Heart Healthy Foods

Eating a heart healthy diet protects your heart and lowers your chance of having another heart attack. Your dietary patterns should include:

1. Choosing nutrient-dense foods like fruits and vegetables
2. Avoiding or reducing processed foods, drinks, and sugars
3. Limiting or reducing sodium (salt) intake
4. Controlling portion size

### Depression

Studies show that 33 percent of heart attack patients experience a wide range of emotions, such as sadness, fear and anger that lasts about 2-6 months after the event. For example, when you feel pain, you may feel afraid it's going to happen again - afraid you're going to die. These feelings are normal and should begin to pass as time goes by.

You may feel angry that this happened, irritated, or have a "short fuse" with others. Resentment can also be common after a heart attack.

### Asking for Help If You Need It

Depression is normal after a heart attack. However, if it interferes with sleeping, eating and your self-esteem, or if you have thoughts of suicide, talk to your doctor and those close to you about your feelings.

- Ask for help. Recovery is much faster with a trusted support team of healthcare professionals, family and friends.
- Call 404-851-8960 to learn about the supportive services we offer.

## 6 WEEK Walking Plan

Use this plan to begin a regular walking program. Walks start at 10 minutes or less and gradually work up to 30-plus minutes. Always start your walk with a 3-5 minute easy warm-up pace. Work towards being able to walk 30-35 minutes without stopping or slowing down. As you progress, vary your speed to challenge yourself.

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
<b>Monday</b>	Easy walk 5-10 min Stretch 2 min Easy walk 5-10 min	Easy walk 5-10 min Stretch 2 min Brisk walk 5-10 min	Easy walk 10-15 min Stretch 2 min Brisk walk 5-10 min	Easy walk 10-15 min Brisk walk 5-10 min Stretch 2 min	Easy walk 10-15 min Brisk walk 10-15 min Stretch 2 min	Easy walk 15-20 min Power walk 30 sec Easy walk 1 min Repeat 4-6 times Easy walk 3-5 min
<b>Tuesday</b>	Easy walk 10-15 min	Easy walk 10-15 min	Easy walk 10-15 min Stretch 2 min	Easy walk 15-20 min Stretch 2 min	Easy walk 25-30 min Stretch 2 min	Choose activity 20-30 min
<b>Wednesday</b>	Easy walk 5-10 min Stretch 2 min Easy walk 5-10 min	Easy walk 5-10 min Stretch 2 min Brisk walk 5-10 min	Easy walk 15-20 min Stretch 2 min Brisk walk 5-10 min	Easy walk 10-15 min Brisk walk 5-10 min Stretch 2 min	Easy walk 10-15 min Brisk walk 10-15 min Stretch 2 min	Easy walk 30-35 min Stretch 2 min
<b>Thursday</b>	Easy walk 5-10 min	Easy walk 5-10 min	Easy walk 15-20 min Stretch 2 min	Easy walk 15-20 min Stretch 2 min	Easy walk 25-30 min Stretch 2 min	Easy walk 30-35 min Stretch 2 min
<b>Friday</b>	Rest	Rest	Rest	Rest	Choose activity 20+ min	Rest
<b>Weekend (optional)</b>	Easy walk 10-15 min	Easy walk 10-15 min	Easy walk 15-20 min	Brisk walk 20-25 min	Easy walk 25-35 min	Easy walk 25-35 min



Make sure you can talk while you walk. If you feel too winded to talk, slow down. Remember to rest if necessary.

## Resuming Sexual Activity

It is normal to worry about how much your heart can handle. Most doctors agree you can resume sexual activity 4-6 weeks following a heart attack. Some people report having sex less often than before the event. Medical care, time and counseling can help resolve any issues. Call your doctor for questions and concerns.

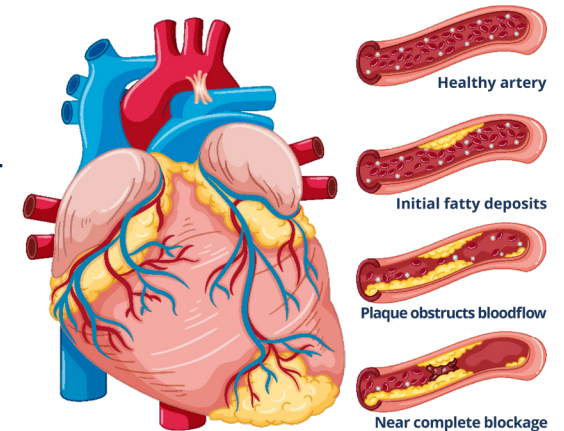


## Understanding Coronary Artery Disease

A build up of plaque (sticky deposits) in arteries is called atherosclerosis. Coronary arteries carry blood and oxygen to the heart. Atherosclerosis in these arteries is called coronary artery disease (CAD). If blood flow to the heart slows or stops, a heart attack can occur.

What are CAD Risk Factors?

A risk factor is something that increases your chance of developing heart disease. You cannot control some risk factors, but you can reduce the effects of most through lifestyle changes.



Risk Factors You CAN Control

- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Obesity
- Physical activity
- Stress
- Diabetes/high blood sugar

Risk Factors You CANNOT Control

- Age - older than 45 in men and older than 55 in women
- Family History - father or brother diagnosed with CAD before age 55 and mother or sister diagnosed with CAD before age 65
- Sex and Gender - men have a higher risk for CAD

## Smoking

Nicotine constricts blood vessels raising your blood pressure and heart rate. The carbon monoxide released while smoking damages the inner lining of the vessels allowing plaque to collect more quickly. This increases the risk for disease in your coronary arteries and the other arteries in the body.

The incidence of heart attack in women who smoke is six times higher than women who have never smoked. For men who smoke, the incidence is triple that of nonsmokers.



**SMOKING IS ONE OF THE WORST THINGS YOU CAN DO TO YOUR HEART.  
FIND A WAY TO QUIT NOW!**



### RESOURCES TO HELP YOU QUIT SMOKING

Smoking increases your risk for heart disease and heart attack.

For help with quitting, contact:

- [SmokeFree.gov](http://SmokeFree.gov) or call 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669)
- 855-DEJELO-YA (855-335-3569) para Español
- [Northside.com/smoking-and-tobacco-resources](http://Northside.com/smoking-and-tobacco-resources)
- 404-780-7653 or email [SmokingCessation@northside.com](mailto:SmokingCessation@northside.com) to register for our Built to Quit program

## High Blood Pressure

A healthy blood pressure is 130/80 or less. Uncontrolled blood pressure hardens and thickens arteries, narrowing the passage for blood flow to the heart and other organs. You can control high blood pressure by:

- Losing weight
- Eating less than 2000mg of sodium per day
- Exercising regularly

## High Cholesterol

High cholesterol increases the risk of plaque build-up in your blood vessels (atherosclerosis). Lab results break down the cholesterol in your blood into total cholesterol, LDL, HDL and triglycerides.

### Cholesterol Goals

LDL: less than 70

HDL: above 40

Triglycerides: less than 150

*Cholesterol goals for patients with coronary artery disease (CAD)*

Low-density lipoprotein (LDL), known as "bad" cholesterol, increases plaque build up.

High-density lipoprotein (HDL), known as "good" cholesterol, lowers cholesterol in the blood.

Triglycerides are a type of fat in the blood. A diet high in sugar, alcohol and fat increases triglyceride levels. A combination of high LDL, low HDL and high triglycerides increases your risk for a heart attack.

To control cholesterol, eat less saturated fat and trans fat. Read food labels to help you make healthy choices. Eliminate as many trans-fat foods from your diet that you can. Trans fats are made when liquid oils are turned into solid fats, such as shortening or margarine.



*Trans fat is the worst type of fat for your heart and your overall health. Eliminate as many from your diet as you can.*

## Obesity

Carrying too much body weight makes your heart work harder to supply blood to all parts of the body. If you are overweight, you are more likely to have high blood pressure and high cholesterol increasing your risk for atherosclerosis.

To lose weight, you need to burn more calories than your body needs. Regular exercise helps burn calories. Eating smaller portions and cutting back on high-fat and high-calorie foods can also help you lose weight.

## Physical Inactivity

Lack of exercise contributes to all of the risk factors for heart disease and stroke. Exercise lowers blood pressure, cholesterol, stress and blood sugar. It also helps you lose weight, increase HDL (good cholesterol), and improve the quality of your sleep.

## Stress

Stress causes your body to produce chemicals that make your heart pump harder. Long-term stress raises blood pressure. Exercising, meditating, praying, bonding with pets and listening to relaxing music can lower stress levels. Identify things in your life that lower anxiety and stress and participate in them regularly.

## Diabetes

Diabetes causes blood sugar to get too high. High blood sugar damages arteries, increasing your risk for atherosclerosis.

If you have diabetes:

- Check your blood sugar regularly
- Take your medications as prescribed
- Follow a diabetic meal plan
- Exercise regularly
- Maintain a healthy weight



## Rehabilitation After a Cardiac Event

Northside Hospital's Cardiac Rehabilitation (Cardiac Rehab) is a medically supervised rehabilitation program for patients recovering from a heart attack, heart surgery or other forms of heart disease. The cardiac rehab staff identifies your risk factors and provides a personalized treatment plan. The program focuses on exercise, education, nutrition and emotional support.

### Our goal is to help you:

- Regain your strength and stamina
- Prevent your condition from getting worse
- Reduce your risk for future heart events
- Improve your quality of life
- Establish a lifelong heart healthy lifestyle

### What Does Cardiac Rehab Involve?

Our highly-trained staff creates a customized treatment plan for you. The plan involves monitored exercise, nutritional counseling, emotional support, and education about lifestyle changes to reduce your risk for heart disease.

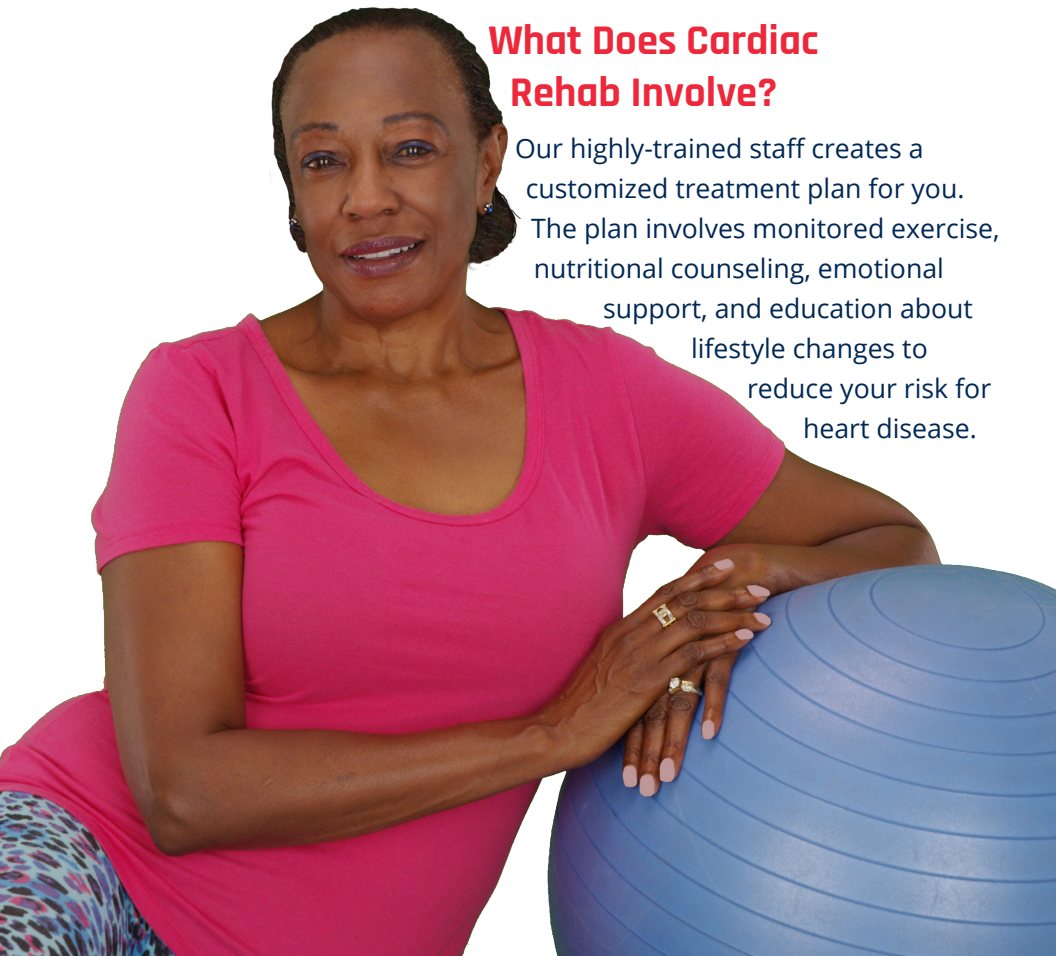


### Benefits of Cardiac Rehab

- Exercise in a medically supervised environment
- Decrease emotional stress, depression and anxiety
- Improve your quality of life
- Increase your energy, physical stamina and strength
- Learn how to manage your heart health
- Decrease your risk of a heart event
- Reduce the number of doctor and hospital visits
- Receive emotional support from staff and others with heart disease

### Will My Insurance Cover the Cost?

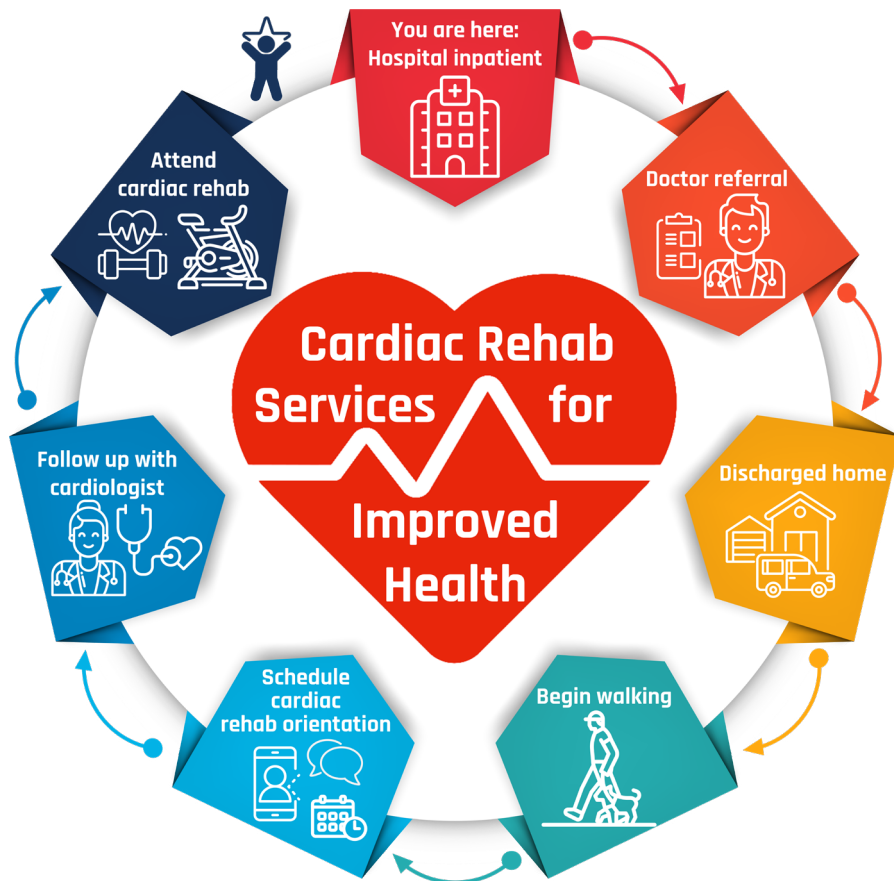
Medicare and private health insurance may cover most of the cost of cardiac rehab. Your cardiac rehab team works with you and your insurance company to determine your coverage.



## Mended Hearts

Mended Hearts is a national support group that connects those who survived heart events with current patients and offers educational resources to help with recovery. Members can visit others with heart disease at Northside Hospital and over the telephone or Internet. They may also participate in monthly support/education meetings. For more information, go to [mendedhearts.org](http://mendedhearts.org).

## How To Get Started



## Cardiac Rehabilitation Locations



**ATLANTA**  
 993- C Johnson Ferry Rd.  
 Suite 130  
 Atlanta, GA. 30342  
 404-845-5263

**CHEROKEE**  
 470 Northside Cherokee Blvd.  
 Suite 355  
 Canton, GA. 30115  
 770-721-9150

**FORSYTH**  
 1400 Northside Forsyth Dr.  
 Suite 170  
 Cumming, GA. 30041  
 770-844-3639

**GWINNETT**  
 665 Duluth Hwy,  
 Suite 600  
 Lawrenceville, GA. 30046  
 678-312-3692

## Notes

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**AT HEART**

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