

Heart Attack: Leaving the Hospital



Once you are discharged from the hospital, your recovery will continue at home. How long it takes to recover depends on several things. These include how much damage the heart attack caused, what complications occurred, and what treatments you had. When you leave the hospital, you'll get instructions on how to care for yourself at home. Be sure you have all the information you need. You will likely leave the hospital with new medicines that may include aspirin, cholesterol-lowering medicine, and medicine that helps lower blood pressure and lessen the stress placed on your heart. These medicines are to help prevent another heart attack in the future. Making changes in your lifestyle to include heart healthy habits will also be important. These may include quitting smoking, eating a heart healthy diet, doing regular aerobic exercise, lowering your stress level, and getting proper rest.



Questions for your healthcare provider

Before you leave the hospital, make sure to know the answers to these questions:

- When should I schedule my first follow-up appointment? How often are these appointments needed?
- What medicines do I need and how do I take them? When do I need to come back to have these checked or readjusted, if necessary?
- What further tests do I need?
- What symptoms should I watch for? What are the signs and symptoms of a condition that needs immediate attention? Does this mean call my healthcare provider, or call **911**?
- How soon can I start a cardiac rehab program?
- When can I return to work? When can I drive? Be active? Have sex?
- How can I get help managing payment for my medical care?

Joining a cardiac rehab program

Cardiac rehabilitation (rehab) helps you recover after a heart attack. This program helps you learn how to make changes to improve your health and reduce your chances of having another heart attack. You might start an

inpatient program while you're in the hospital. If not, ask your healthcare provider about finding a program to join after you leave the hospital.

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