

# Cardiac Rehabilitation Service

Cardiac Rehabilitation service  
following a Heart Attack.



## **What is Cardiac Rehabilitation?**

Cardiac rehabilitation gives you and your family the information, support and advice you require:

To understand your condition

Restore Confidence

To return to as normal and active life as possible

To encourage you to make lifestyle changes which will improve your long-term wellbeing and reduce the risk of a further cardiac event.

The rehabilitation programme offers a range of options to aid recovery and to support you in managing your heart condition.

## **Initial Contact**

You will be phoned by one of our team on receipt of your referral from the hospital. If we are unable to contact, you by phone we will write you a letter. We will then offer an appointment in one of our local clinics in either Great Yarmouth, Gorleston, Lowestoft, Beccles or Solebay.

## Clinics

This will be your opportunity to be seen individually by a Cardiac Rehabilitation Practitioner and ask questions. You are welcome to bring a family member or friend if this is helpful to you.

Please inform us if you require an interpreter specifying language required.

We will discuss your cardiac event and how we can help you to reduce the chance of further cardiac issues in the future be that with medicines and lifestyle.

We ask that you bring your medicines in the original boxes so that we can discuss the purpose, timing, any issues with side effects and any blood test monitoring that may be needed. We are not prescribers therefore repeat prescriptions and medication enquiries need to be arranged with your GP surgery.

During this consultation you **may** be offered a short exercise assessment if this is deemed appropriate. Please therefore wear comfortable clothing and flat soft soled shoes. If you are Diabetic, please bring your blood sugar machine and a snack. The exercise assessment may

include a walk or stepping up and down on a step. This appointment will last 60 -90 mins.

Otherwise, you may be offered an exercise assessment later if appropriate to your needs.

The purpose of the exercise assessment is to determine a baseline level of fitness and discuss your short-term goals.

From this exercise assessment you may be offered the opportunity to attend a 6-week exercise and programme.

You may be given some home exercises to do while you wait to join the classes.

### **Exercise sessions**

6-week circuit-based programme that can be adapted to your individual level.

## Initial weeks at home

### Medication

Contact your GP surgery to arrange repeat prescriptions of your discharge medication from the hospital. This medication is ongoing. Please disregard any medication you were taking prior to your hospital admission.

Our team are not clinical prescribers and will not be able to dispense medication.

If you have started new medication, it may be beneficial to check your blood pressure. If you would like to purchase a blood pressure machine, we would recommend choosing from the list on the British Hypertension Society for home use. The machine needs to go around your upper arm, and it is important to purchase the correct cuff size.

[www.bihs.org.uk](http://www.bihs.org.uk)

Alternatively, you can book an appointment at your surgery to have your blood pressure checked.

The aim is for your blood pressure to be maintained at 130/80 or less.

## Medications

### Type

### Examples

#### Anti-Platelets

#### Aspirin

Makes the blood less sticky and reduces the risk of another Heart Attack.

Important to take after food. Take life long after a Heart Attack unless Consultant advises otherwise.

Ticagrelor  
Clopidogrel  
Prasugrel

Taken in addition to Aspirin. Makes the blood less sticky and reduce the risk of the blood clots forming in an artery particularly after a heart attack or vulnerable area after a Balloon Angioplasty or on a Stent. Given for a specific length of time 1-4 years after a Heart Attack. You may notice you bruise or bleed more easily and get short of breath.

#### Gastric Protection

Lansoprazole  
Omeprazole  
Famotidine

Reduce stomach acid production and provides protection against gastric ulceration which can be a risk of Anti-Platelets

Important to take 30 mins – 1 hr before breakfast

Ace Inhibitors (ACEI) ,

Ramipril  
Lisinopril  
Perindopril

Ease the workload of the heart by relaxing blood vessels, thus reducing the workload of the heart.

Angiotensin Receptor  
Blockers (ARB),

Candesartan  
Losartan

These work similar to Ace Inhibitors and are an alternative if Ace Inhibitors are not tolerated.

Angiotensin Receptor  
Neprilysin Inhibitors  
(ARNI),

Sacubitril Valsartan  
(Entresto)

Work by relaxing the blood vessels and getting rid of excess salt and fluid to reduce the workload on the heart.

Beta-Blockers ,

Bisoprolol  
Carvedilol  
Nebivolol

These make the Heartbeat slower but Stronger.

## Blood tests

If you have been newly commenced on heart medication you are likely to need a blood test for your kidney function 2 weeks after discharge. Please contact your GP surgery to arrange this.

## Symptoms

It is common to experience some niggles in your chest on discharge. If you experience any symptoms which you associate with your heart attack that last more than 2 mins follow these instructions

1. Sit down
2. Take a puff of GTN spray under your tongue,
3. Wait 5 mins
4. If symptoms are not completely gone and you are not feeling dizzy take another puff of GTN spray under your tongue
5. Wait 5 mins. If symptoms are not completely relieved call 999.

## Lifestyle

It can feel overwhelming when you are first discharged from hospital. If you would like to read any information whilst waiting to see us in clinic we would recommend the following websites:

[www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk) information about cardiac conditions, lifestyle advice, medication and exercise

[www.diabetesuk.org](http://www.diabetesuk.org)- how to gain effective control in managing your Diabetes and the link between Diabetes and Cardiac Conditions

For specific information about returning to exercise/active hobbies. The Association of Chartered Physiotherapist in Cardiac Rehabilitation (ACICPR) has produced relevant fact sheets that can be accessed via their website.

[www.acpicr.com](http://www.acpicr.com) (click publications and then scroll down to patient leaflets).

[www.nhs.uk/live-well](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well)

### **Activity at home**

Try walking the distance you walked in the hospital and gradually build up by a few minutes every 2-3 days if this distance feels fairly easy.

Try light housework like dusting, washing up, preparing meals.

### Activities to avoid for the first 6 weeks

Heavy lifting, pushing and pulling

Heavy lawn mowing and sustained activities that involves raising both arms above your head for example hedge trimming or cleaning windows.

### Relationships

Resuming relationships and sexual activity can be an important factor during your recovery. As a guide for most people, full sexual activity can be resumed 2-4 weeks following a heart attack. You are advised to build up gradually as you would any other physical activities.

### Work

You can self-certify for your first week off sick. You need to contact your GP for an ongoing sick note. You will need to discuss the nature of your work with your GP so they can sign you off for an appropriate number of weeks for your safety and allow your heart time to heal.

If you do a manual job, you will need 6-12 weeks off work depending on the type of manual work and the severity of your cardiac event.

Desk based work usually requires 4-6 weeks.

If your employer has an occupational health

department or Nurse, we would recommend contacting them about how they can safely support you back into your workplace.

If you have any questions whilst you are waiting to see us, please do not hesitate to contact us on 01493 809977 where you can leave a message for “Cardiac Rehabilitation”.

We are not an emergency service therefore if you are concerned about any new or worsening symptoms, please contact your GP surgery or NHS 111.

### The Team

Paula Baker

Cardiac Specialist Nurse & Team Lead

Moira Alderson

Cardiac Rehabilitation Nurse

Emma Gainsborough

Cardiac Rehabilitation Nurse

Hannah Debenham

Cardiology Support Worker

Daniel Hale

Cardiac Exercise Therapist

For help with queries about ECCH's services, or

We can be contacted on the following number:

**01493**

**809977**

to provide feedback, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service:

**Tel:** 01502 445447

**Email:** [patientliaison@ecchcic.nhs.uk](mailto:patientliaison@ecchcic.nhs.uk)

Or write to:

PALS, East Coast Community Healthcare,  
Hamilton House, Battery Green Road,  
Lowestoft, NR32 1DE

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