

Heart rehabilitation

Heart rehabilitation

Being admitted to hospital because of a heart disease is a dramatic event. Both you and the people in your surroundings require time and energy to get used to the situation. You have to slowly rebuild your trust in your own body and your condition. Also, many patients should make changes in their former lifestyle to prevent new cardiac symptoms in the future. Heart rehabilitation is thus a logical step to take after discharge from the hospital. At that time you could really use some extra support, and our heart rehabilitation programme can answer that need for you and your partner.

The most important aims of heart rehabilitation are:

- To return heart patients as far as possible to their former activities before the heart disease manifested.
- To alleviate the psychological and social problems often associated with a heart disease.
- To teach heart patients to lead healthy lives that reduce the risk of worsening their heart disease.

Am I eligible for heart rehabilitation?

The nurse, the physiotherapist or your cardiologist has talked to you about heart rehabilitation. They will register you if you are interested.

Before leaving the hospital, you will be visited by the heart rehabilitation nurse, she will discuss the heart rehabilitation programme with you.

Individualised heart rehabilitation

As not everyone has the same need for information, support and physical training, we strive to match the programme to your individual needs as far as possible. And of course the package can be modified during the programme period.

The rehabilitation programme consists of a nursing consultation and three rehabilitation sections:

Nursing consultation

For many patients and their partners it is useful and pleasant to discuss the information once again with a nurse after discharge or after visiting the specialist.

During your hospital stay and after discharge, you had a talk with the heart rehabilitation nurse. You discussed which form of rehabilitation would suit you best. Your clinical picture, personal needs, general condition and home environment all need to be considered.

Information meetings

These information meetings are conducted by various experts. Each one speaks from his/her own specialist viewpoint about the risk factors and the consequences of the heart disease. Naturally, they will also consider how to avoid the risk factors and promote your own recovery. This part of the rehabilitation programme consists of four group meetings which you attend with your partner or a family member.

The themes of the information meetings:

1. A cardiologist discusses the medical context, treatment methods and risk factors of heart diseases.
2. A dietician provides information about healthy eating and drinking habits. If you want, you can make an appointment with her for a personal dietary recommendation and possibly continued supervision.
3. A psychologist talks about the prevention of and dealing with feelings of anxiety, dejection and irritability, in both the patient and the partner.
4. A social worker points out potential physical limitations and social consequences you can experience as a result of the heart disease.
She gives advice about how best to cope with these limitations/ consequences.

Physical exercise programme

Under supervision of a physiotherapist, you can improve your physical condition through sports and games. You will also learn about relaxation exercises and explore your own limits.

This section is done as part of a group, without your partner. It is also possible to follow an individualised programme. The physical exercise programme is done 1, 2, 3 or 4 times a week, depending on the sections. During the intake interview with the physiotherapist, the programme is arranged to meet your individual care needs in a tailored way.

Lifestyle course

In this section the psychologist and nurse offer more intensive supervision to small groups.

You can take this part of the rehabilitation programme with your partner/family member as a supplement to the information meetings.

The aim is to learn to cope with the changes you will have to make in your daily life.

For example, we consider:

- **Stopping smoking:** you will be given tips to help you stop smoking.
- **Stress:** you learn about the link between the situation that is occurring and your rapid reaction to it.

Once you have completed the heart rehabilitation programme, we shall send you a questionnaire. We would like to ask you to complete it and send it back in the enclosed reply envelope. This will help us to evaluate your heart rehabilitation process, giving us an indication of what effect our programme has.

Success

Both patients and partners can expect positive results from the heart rehabilitation programme. We cannot guarantee, however, that you will achieve the aims listed. Realising these goals depends not only on the programme offered but more importantly on your own situation and commitment.

Questions

If you have any questions about heart rehabilitation, please

contact one of the heart rehabilitation nurses. The nurses can usually answer your question themselves or put you in touch with the various experts in the rehabilitation team if necessary.

Cost

The heart rehabilitation programme is reimbursed by your health insurance provider as part of the standard care package.

Heart rehabilitation nurses:
Gerda Nijholt and Mirjam van Aalsum

Available by telephone:
0031 512 588211 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays
if there is no answer, call the cardiologists' secretariat:
0031 512 588186

e-mail: hartrevalidatie@nijsmellinghe.nl