

**Cardiac Rehabilitation: Safety Plan**

Nov 12, 2024

You may have worries about returning to exercise after a cardiac event. Most patients can safely exercise at home or at the gym following a cardiac event with proper precautions. It is important to follow any special guidelines from your medical team regarding blood pressure or exercise limitations.

Cardiac rehabilitation staff can further guide you on techniques to exercise safely, including creating a safe exercise environment, warming up and cooling down properly, monitoring your heart rate, and when to increase your exercise regimen.

Please also review the safety tips below:

**Environment & Set-up**

- Make sure the area where you plan to exercise in is free of tripping hazards, such as rugs or pets.
- Wear comfortable clothing and shoes that fit securely.
- Ensure that there is good lighting and ventilation in the exercise area.
- Keep water nearby during your exercise session.
- If your cardiologist has prescribed you nitroglycerin, keep this nearby during exercise.
- Keep your phone with you during exercise and have your important emergency contacts saved.
- If you exercise at a gym or facility, consider making the gym staff aware of your heart condition and exercise plan; share up-to-date emergency contact information.
- Confirm your location and emergency contact information with cardiac rehabilitation staff at the beginning of each session.
- Consider sharing your exercise plan with someone else – let them know when and where you plan to exercise, or exercise with a buddy.
- Suggest that your friends and family learn basic CPR techniques.

**Symptoms & Communication**

**A key safeguard is to pay attention to how you feel and STOP exercising if you experience new or worrisome symptoms.**

**Call 911** for emergencies. Emergency warning symptoms can include:

- a. Severe shortness-of-breath, beyond the usual you might experience during moderate exercise
- b. Chest pressure, chest pain, or new aching in the chest, arm, jaw, or neck, especially if this begins during exercise
- c. Tearing pain in the chest or abdomen radiating to the back
- d. New numbness or paralysis
- e. Severe light-headedness or dizziness that does not resolve with sitting
- f. New, irregular heart rhythm or heart fluttering that does not resolve with rest

**Call my care team** for other concerns. Examples of when you would contact cardiac rehabilitation staff versus your cardiologist versus your primary care physician:

- a. Cardiac Rehabilitation Staff: Concerns about home exercise routine or physical limitations to completing exercises, feelings of imbalance/loss of balance, concerns about creating a safe exercise environment, questions about cardiac rehabilitation sessions
- b. Cardiologist: Concerns with cardiovascular medications, blood pressure measurements outside the range discussed with your cardiologist, episode(s) of irregular heart rhythm or heart fluttering that resolve on their own
- c. Primary Care Physician: New joint or muscle discomfort, fatigue that does not resolve with rest

*For Patient to complete:*

Clinical Team Contacts:

	Name(s)	Phone Number
<b>Cardiac Rehabilitation</b>		
<b>Cardiologist</b>		
<b>Primary Care Physician</b>		

Personal Emergency Contacts:

Name	Phone Number	Relationship