

Patient information

Discharge advice following a heart attack

This leaflet is designed to give general information in relation to your discharge.

Exercise

Many people feel unsure about the amount and type of exercise to do following their hospital admission.

As a general guideline, we recommend walking. This is an aerobic exercise, which is very beneficial and often fits in well with routine.

Listen to your body 'Start low go slow'

This is a good common sense approach for any individual who has previously undertaken very little regular exercise or is recovering from illness.

Build up time and effort of activity gradually eg 5-10 minutes initially may be increased steadily to 20-30 minutes as able.

When you go for your walks, start off slowly. Once you feel warmed up, increase your speed, maintaining this level for a period of time, increasing your speed but ensuring you can walk and talk. Slight breathlessness is ok but you must be able to hold a conversation. When starting to return home, begin to slow your pace and return to a gentle speed. This reflects a warm up, exercise and cool down regime, which should be followed whenever exercising.

Take adequate rest periods between activities.

Ensure you take your GTN spray and your mobile phone if you have one.

Inform your partner where you are going.

Activities to avoid initially

- Upper body work ie hoovering, cleaning windows/tiles, cutting grass or decorating. It is advisable **not** to lift heavy weights. Following a period of 4-6 weeks, please discuss with your cardiac nurse or GP for further advice.
- Do **not** exercise for one hour following a meal.
- Do **not** take alcohol before exercising.
- Avoid exercising in extreme weather conditions, this stresses your system and alters your pulse rate.

If you are troubled by angina pain in the cold weather and cannot avoid going out, wear a scarf around your mouth and nose.

- Do **not** exercise if you are feeling ill, on antibiotics or extremely tired.

It is normal to have periods of feeling quite tired, it takes time to recover.

Resuming sexual activity

There are no rule books that say when the time is right. You may start again when you both feel comfortable and ready.

Sex is no different from any other exercise, such as walking up the stairs or taking a brisk walk. When they do not cause you any problems then the time will be right for you.

Anxieties

On discharge it is very normal to feel vulnerable, tearful, and lacking in confidence. This hopefully will be short-lived, but if you find that it continues contact your GP.

You will be discharged home with a GTN spray. Some people, not all suffer from heart discomfort following a heart attack (angina) and may need to use their spray.

Using your GTN spray

- Sit down
- Spray once under tongue

- Wait 5 minutes
- If discomfort still present
- Spray once under tongue
- Wait five minutes
- If discomfort still present ring 999

If you feel the discomfort is similar to the one that brought you into hospital and you feel sick or excessively sweaty Ring 999.

Other information leaflets available

- West Suffolk Hospital booklet 'Discharge Advice Following a Heart Attack.
- British Heart Foundation booklets, including Heart Attack, Rehabilitation and Angina.
- Medication leaflets
- Healthy Eating for a Healthy Heart
- Carers
- Upbeat

Please ring the Cardiac Rehabilitation office if you have any concerns. There is an answer phone for when we are not in the office, leave your name and number and we will get back to you.

Useful telephone numbers

Cardiac Rehabilitation Team Office	01284 713611 (office hours)
Cardiac Care Unit	01284 713332
Cardiology Department	01284 712536
Cardiology Ward	01284 713352

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo) <https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>

