

Cardiac Rehabilitation advice after discharge for your heart condition

Cardiac Rehabilitation

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Introduction

Leaving hospital can be a difficult experience.

The Cardiac Rehabilitation Team want to make sure you feel supported. They want to make sure you know what to expect next. This leaflet will help you in your recovery from your heart condition or heart surgery.

We aim to contact you within 5 working days after your discharge from hospital.

We will:

- introduce our service to you
- talk about your condition
- look at treatment and medications
- answer any questions or concerns you have

We will talk about which type of rehabilitation is best for you to improve your health and well being.

The advice we give is tailored to your health condition, your level of fitness, and is in line with the national guidelines. Following this advice will help your recovery.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Getting started following your discharge from hospital

You will feel that you are less able to do certain physical activities after discharge. This is normal.

You may notice an increase in symptoms like tiredness or breathlessness when you:

- walk upstairs
- walk up a hill
- do day to day activities
- get dressed
- get washed

In some cases these symptoms can stop you doing a particular activity altogether.

These symptoms are common in the early stages of recovery. They will improve over time.

Starting this programme will help to get you moving again. It will help you get back to your daily life.



How do I start to get active?

- Build up your activity and fitness slowly with gentle walks.
- Start with a manageable distance and pace yourself when you walk. Take regular rests when needed.
- Do not do too much, too soon. You should feel like you can walk and hold a conversation at the same time.
- It does not matter if you cannot walk a long distance at first. Do several short walks during the day, at first and build up walking at a longer distance slowly.
- Focus on building your confidence.

Walking Programme

Here is how to build up your walking:

Start with Step 1 and move to the steps after 2 days of not feeling tired after the exercise on that level.

	Walk for:	How many times?
Step 1	3 to 5 minutes	4 to 6 times a day
Step 2	5 to 10 minutes	4 times a day
Step 3	10 to 15 minutes	3 times a day
Step 4	15 to 20 minutes	2 times a day
Step 5	20 to 30 minutes	6 days a week
Step 6	More than 30 minutes	5 days a week



Warming up and cooling down

Warm up: This prepares you for exercise by making sure your heart and body is ready. Walking should start very slowly and build up over the warm up period.

Cool down: At the end of your walk time you should start to slow your pace down before stopping. This lets your body to return to normal.

Benefits of exercise

Here are many reasons that exercise can help you:

- Lowers blood pressure and heart rate
- Reduces chest pain (angina) by encouraging the body to use the network of tiny blood vessels that supply the heart.
- Improves muscle strength
- Improves balance and flexibility
- Lowers your risk of diabetes
- Helps to lose weight
- Helps to lower cholesterol
- Helps to relax and manage stress
- Helps you to get back to your usual daily activities (like work, exercise, household jobs)
- Exercise can also be a fun activity and a great way to spend time with family and friends or even to meet new people



How do I exercise correctly?

There are certain rules that need to be followed in order for exercise to be done safely and to avoid feeling unwell.

Do:

- Start slowly and build up over the programme.
- Warm up and cool down whenever you exercise.
- Wear the right clothes and footwear.
- Wait for at least 1 hour after eating before exercising.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Take it easier for a while if you have had a break in your programme (such as a holiday or illness).
- Exercise with a friend or partner if you can. This may make it easier for you to stay motivated.

Do not:

- Do not exercise if you feel unwell or very low in energy. It may be better to rest until you feel better.
- Do not exercise at a level that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Do not exercise if it is very hot or very cold. Aim for more milder times of the day.
- Do not drink alcohol before you exercise.
- Do not carry on exercising if you feel any pain or dizziness. This can be chest pain or any other type of pain. If this is a new problem then speak to your GP.
- Do not use very hot or very cold showers.
- Do not use saunas or steam rooms soon after you exercise.

When should I see my doctor?

You should call the doctor:

- If you get pain in your chest, neck, shoulder or arm while exercising or at rest and your glyceryl trinitrate (GTN) spray does not help (if you have been prescribed one).
- If you are much more short of breath than usual when exercising or at rest.
- If you often feel dizzy or light headed.
- If you notice a lot of weight gain and or new swellings to your hands, feet, legs or ankles.
- For any other new or unusual pain or symptoms or extreme tiredness.

Please note GTN Spray is only for patients who have had an heart attack or angina. This is not for patients who have had cardiac surgery.

GTN spray (Glyceryl trinitrate)

If you have any kind of chest pain that is mild, moderate, or severe, **you should:**

1. Sit down, take 1 or 2 sprays of GTN under the tongue.
2. Wait 5 minutes.
3. If there is no relief take 2 more sprays under the tongue.
4. Wait 5 minutes
5. **If no relief call 999**

Warning:

- GTN can make you feel dizzy or lightheaded. Sit down where possible when using the spray.
- GTN can also give you a headache. You can take the medication like paracetamol to help with this.



How can I eat well for my heart health and strength?

The food we eat provides the fuel our body needs.

Eating the right types and amounts of food will help recovery. It gives the energy needed to increase physical activity.

The mediterranean diet is the most agreed upon approach to eating healthy.

It includes fresh seasonal ingredients (fruits and vegetables) balanced with good quality proteins and fats.

Eating this way provides you with a good mix of:

- vitamins
- minerals
- carbohydrates
- fats
- proteins

This will help to support immunity, energy and healthy function of organs.

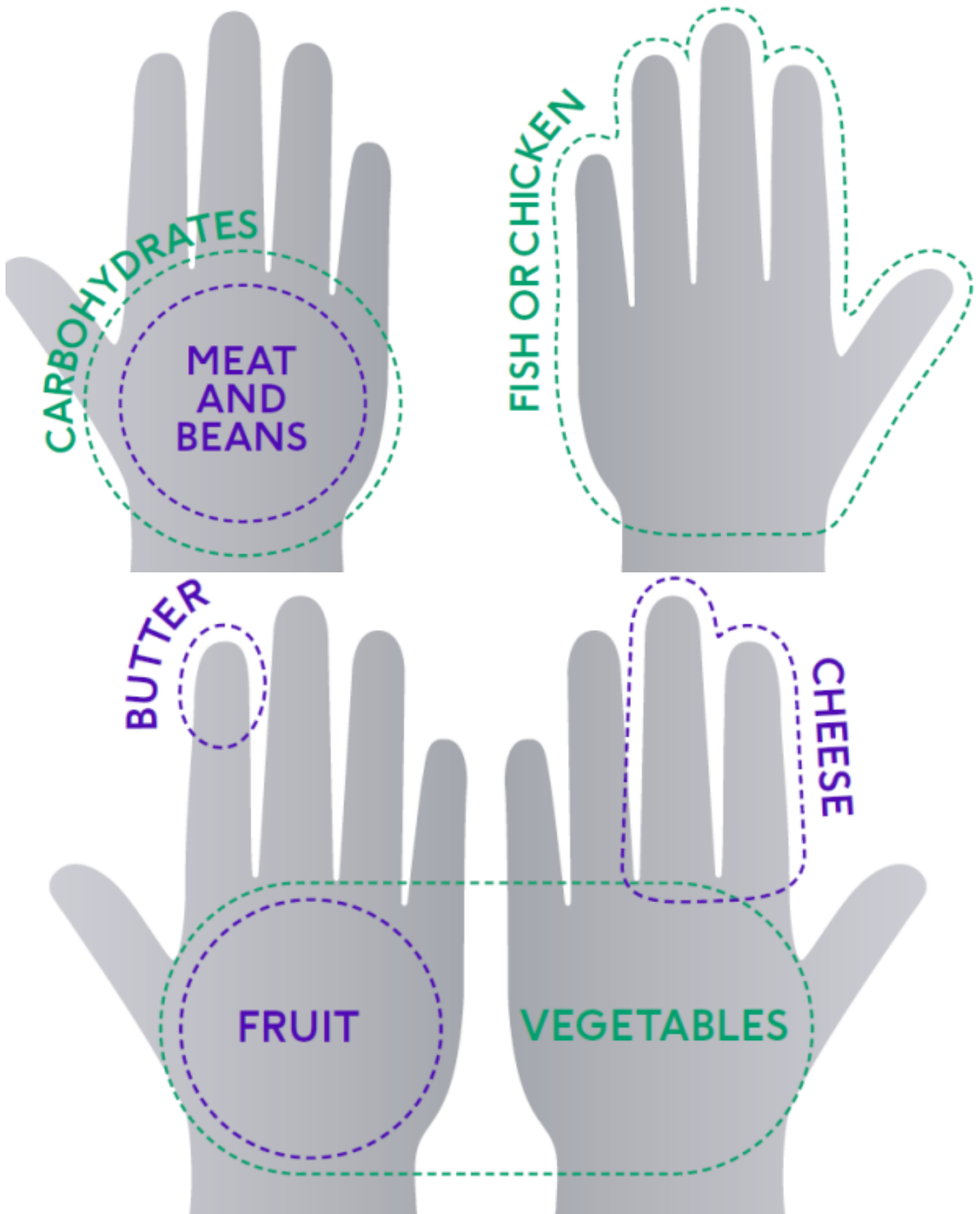
The absorption of food and nutrients happens throughout our digestive system and gut meaning that our gut health is key.





How do I get portion sizes right?

It is easy to measure food portions using your hands.



Why should I not eat ultra processed foods?

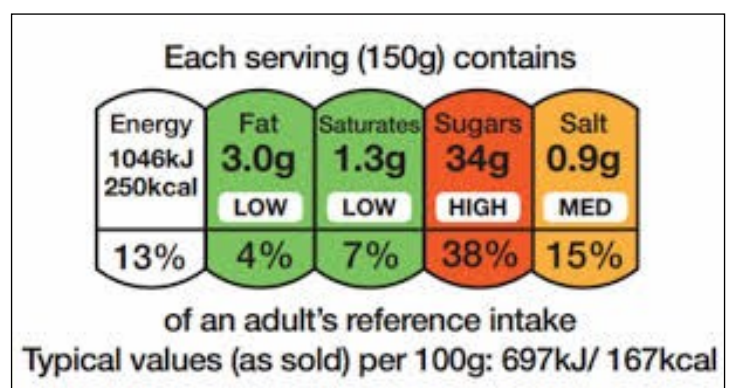
Many people have ultra processed foods in their diets.

- These are foods that have more than 1 ingredient that is rarely found in a kitchen.
- These foods also have a lot of additives, salt, sugar and unhealthy fats (saturated).
- These foods will have a lot of preservatives and a long shelf life.
- Too much of these ingredients can have negative effects on our health.
- Where possible you should aim to reduce these types of foods and replace with healthier choices.



How do I read a food label?

- Most food packages have a traffic light system that helps you choose what to eat.
- The label will tell you if a food is low, medium or high in fat and saturated fat.
- The label will tell you how much sugar and salt there is in the food.
- Foods that have green labels are healthier choices.
- Foods with mostly red labels will be less healthy. It may be best to eat it once in a while.
- The numbers given on these labels are for 100g of the food.
- It would be a good idea to know about suggested portion size. This can also help guide you with your food choices.



What if I am vegetarian or vegan?

If you choose to go meat free, making sure you have a good balance of nutrients is key to maintaining good health and strong muscles.

- Try to have a varied diet to maintain the balance of vital nutrients.
- Try new foods and research ways of preparing and cooking foods to maximise flavour and nutrients.
- Make sure to include a variety of beans and legumes as they will add much needed protein.
- Add Vitamin B12 and extra protein can help tip the balance back in your favour.
- As in any diet limit your ultra processed foods.



What do I need to remember?

- Try the mediterranean diet. It is considered the best approach for maintaining heart health.
- Try to focus on what you can do to your diet to make it healthier rather than what you need to cut out.
- Everything can be enjoyed in moderation but fruit and vegetables, whole grains, healthy fats and protein are key.
- Try to reduce ultra-processed foods where possible and keep an eye on food labels.
- Don't try to have the perfect diet, aim for the best diet you can maintain in the long term.
- While alcohol in most cases will do you no harm, try to stay below the recommended level of less than 14 units per week. Aim to have at least 2 days alcohol free.
- Limit salt intake to less than 5g per day (just under a teaspoon).

Useful Websites

If you do not have access to the internet please let us know.

British Heart Foundation

www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/conditions

On your heart condition, scroll through the list to find your condition.



Angina

www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/conditions/angina

Atrial fibrillation (AF)

www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/conditions/atrial-fibrillation

Coronary Heart Disease (known as CHD on your discharge letter)

www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/conditions/coronary-heart-disease

Heart attack (which may be called NSTEMI, STEMI or myocardial infarction on your discharge letter)

www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/conditions/heart-attack

Heart failure

www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/conditions/heart-failure



Valve surgery

www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/conditions/heart-valve-disease

More information on diet

NHS

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>

HEART UK (Gives advice on foods low in cholesterol, world foods and heart health foods)

<https://www.heartuk.org.uk/>

British Heart Foundation (Heart and food advice)

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/support/healthy-living/healthy-eating>

South Asian healthy recipes

<https://leicesterleicestershireandrutland.icb.nhs.uk/your-health/your-healthy-kitchen/>

Take Heart Leicester

Support group for Heart Patients who meet on the first Saturday of every month in the Education Centre Glenfield Hospital 10am to 12 am.

Website : www.takeheartleicester.co.uk

Email: thl@takeheartleicester.co.uk



If you would like to speak to a member of the Cardiac Rehabilitation Team with any questions about your cardiac condition, please contact the helpline below:

Please be aware this is **not** an emergency helpline.

This phone line operates from Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm, excluding weekends and bank holidays.

Cardiac Rehabilitation, Glenfield Hospital call: 0116 258 3986

Scan this using your phone camera to find out more about Cardiac Rehabilitation



اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

જે તુમીં ઇંચ જાણવારી કિમે હેર જામાં વિંચ ચાહુંદે હે, ડાં વિરખા વચ્ચે હેઠાં હિંડે ગદે નંબર 'હે ટેલીફોન વચે।
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

Previous reference:

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk