Your Prescription for Health Series

EXERCISING FOLLOWING CARDIAC TRANSPLANT

Your Prescription for Health
ExeRxcise is Medicine™
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Exercise can play an important role in the rehabilitation following cardiac transplant because of its positive effect on many of the contributing factors for heart disease, including high blood pressure and cholesterol, diabetes and obesity. Aerobic exercise, in particular, increases blood flow throughout the body and reduces the strain on your heart when you're doing everyday things like climbing stairs or carrying groceries. The key to maximizing the benefits of exercise is to follow a well-designed program that you can stick to over the long-term.

Getting Started

- Talk with your cardiologist before starting an exercise program and ask for specific programming recommendations.
- Take all medications as recommended by your physician.
- The goals of your program should be to improve cardiovascular fitness, increase muscle strength and endurance, improve flexibility, and reduce your risk of injury.
- Choose low-impact activities such as walking, cycling or water exercises. Start with shorter sessions (10 to 15 minutes) and gradually build up to 20 to 60 minutes, at least three to five days per week.
- Perform upper-body flexibility exercises, but avoid traditional strength-training exercises that may cause pulling on the sternum for at least 12 weeks after surgery.
- Take frequent breaks during activity if needed. Your workouts should be comfortable and not strained.

Exercise Cautions

- Even if you were active prior to surgery, you probably experienced a dramatic decrease in fitness during your recovery period. Closely monitor how hard you exercise. Your exercises can feel stimulating, but should feel comfortable.
- Stop exercising immediately if you experience chest pain or angina. Contact your physician if you experience chest pain, labored breathing or extreme fatigue. If you need immediate assistance, dial 911.
- An extended active cool-down may reduce the risk of cardiovascular complications following exercise.

Your exercise program should be designed to maximize the benefits with the fewest risks of aggravating your health or physical condition. Consider contacting a certified health and fitness professional* who can work with you and your health care provider to establish realistic goals and design a safe and effective program that addresses your specific needs.

IN THE SERIES:

- > Cardiovascular Diseases
- > Pulmonary Diseases
- > Metabolic Diseases
- > Immunological/ Hematological Disorders
- > Orthopedic Diseases and Disabilities
- > Neuromuscular Disorders

**If your health care provider has not cleared you for independent physical activity and would like you to be monitored in a hospital setting or a medical fitness facility, you should exercise only under the supervision of a certified professional. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) has two groups of certified fitness professionals that could meet your needs. The ACSM Certified Clinical Exercise Specialist (CES) is certified to support those with heart disease, diabetes and lung disease. The ACSM Registered Clinical Exercise Physiologist (RCEP) is qualified to support patients with a wide range of health challenges. You may locate all ACSM-certified fitness professionals by using the ProFinder at www.acsm.org.*

For more information, visit www.exerciseismedicine.org or e-mail eim@acsm.org.