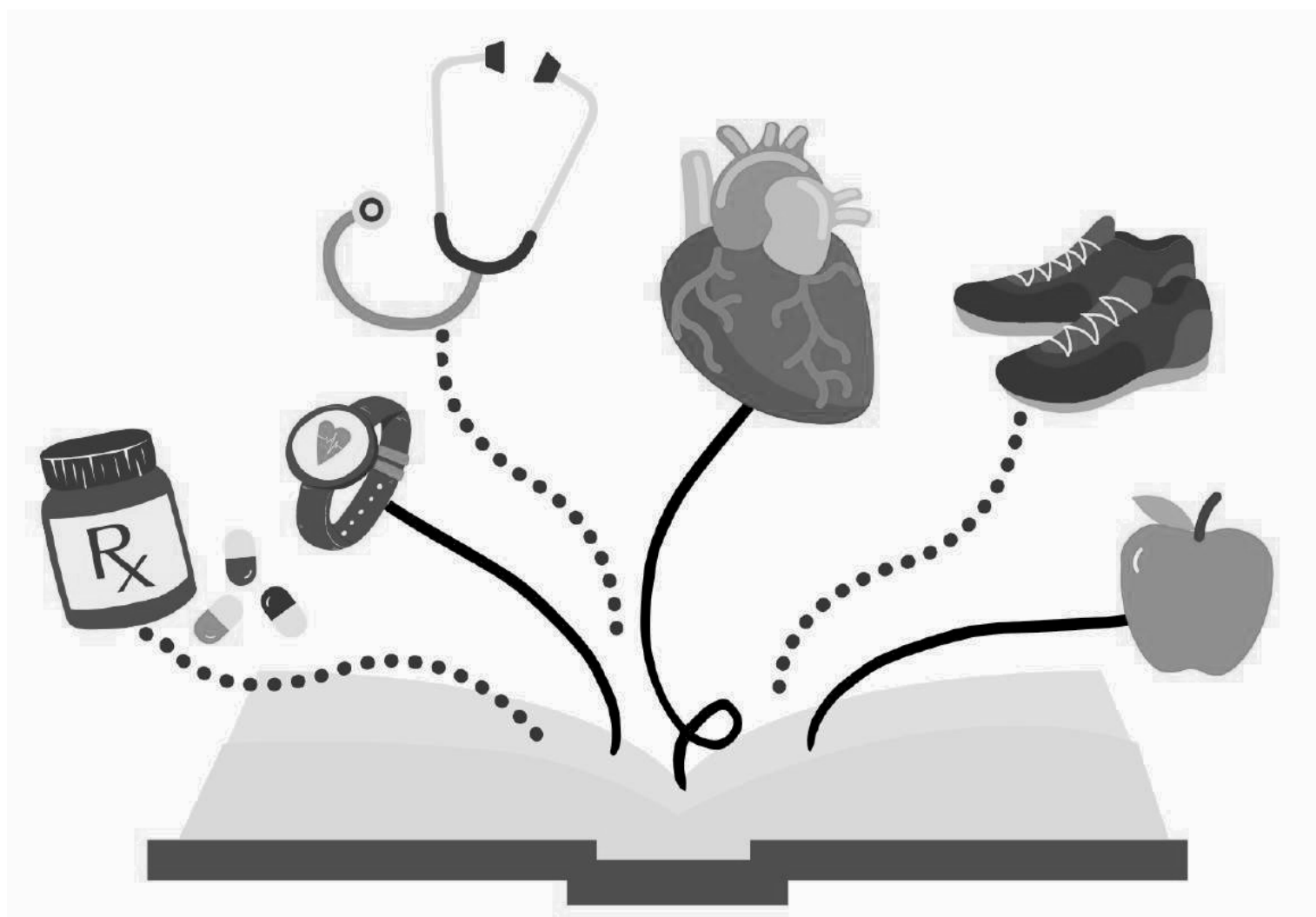


Cardiac Rehabilitation and Secondary Prevention Program

Patient Education Guide



CARING FOR THE BODY, MIND & SPIRIT SINCE 1869

Renowned for compassionate care, St. Joseph's is one of the best academic health care organizations in Canada dedicated to helping people live to their fullest by minimizing the effects of injury, disease and disability through excellence in care, teaching and research.

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V_01Jan212021



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How to join your education session

Marilyn Hill, C. Psych.



St. Joseph's Virtual Care Helpline



519 685-8390



Monday - Friday 8am - 4pm

You can join your session using a computer, tablet, smartphone, or telephone. The steps you take to join your session are different depending on which device you use. Please follow the steps that best match your device below.

If you have technical difficulties, contact the Helpline number listed on the top of this page.

Before your session:



Go to a private, quiet place away from your family and pets. Close the door for privacy. If others can hear you, please use earphones to protect the privacy of other group members.



Prevent interruptions. Talk to your family and come up with a plan. Use a do not disturb sign.



Turn off any devices not being used during the session.



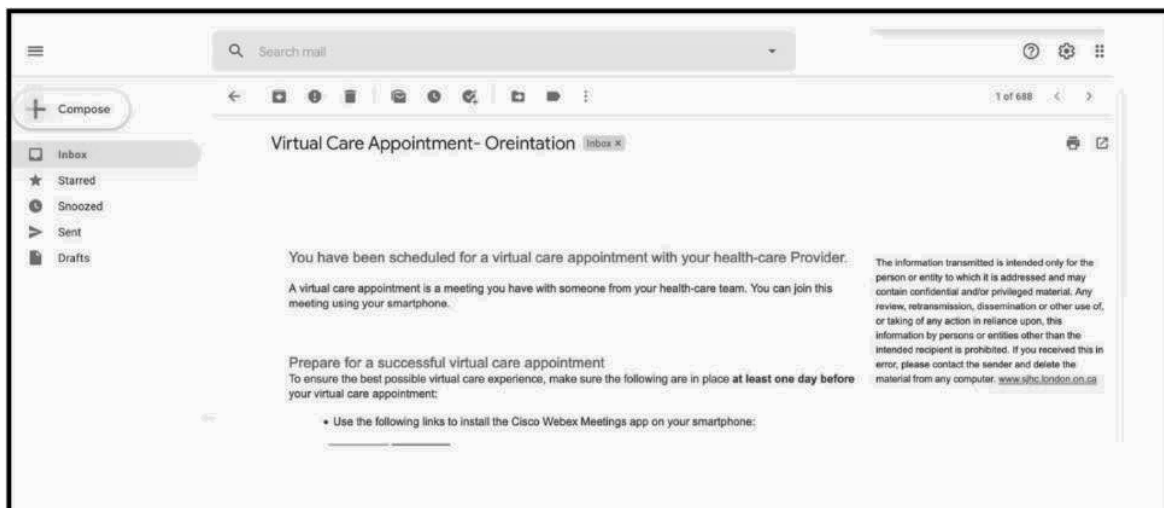
Choose a spot where you can alternate between sitting and standing comfortably.

Steps to join by computer, tablet, or smartphone (video and audio):

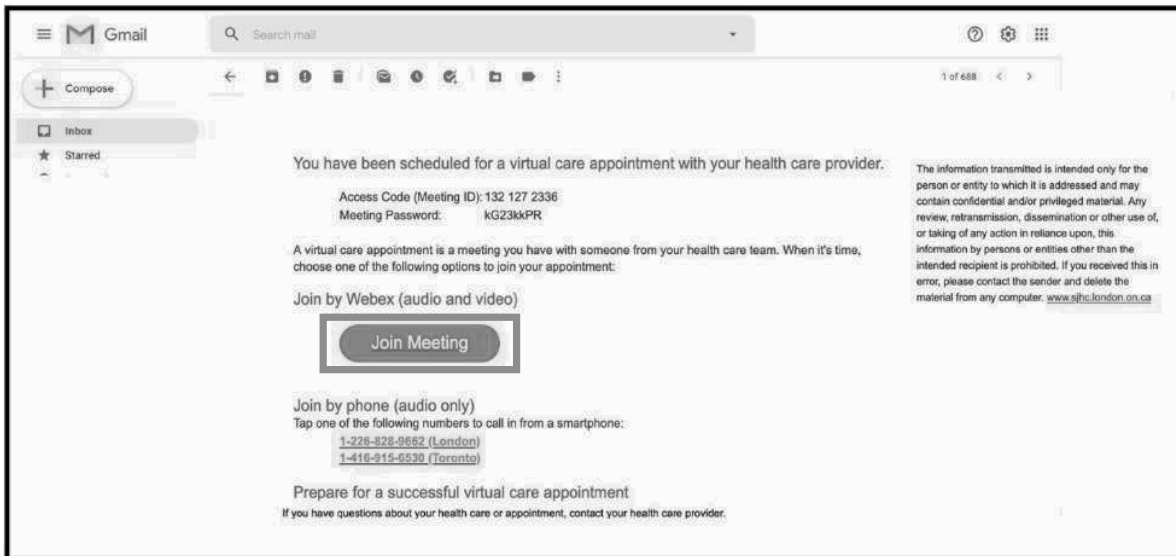
A few days before your session, we recommend that you practice joining the session, and testing of your camera, microphone, and speakers.

On the day of your session, try to log-in 15 minutes early to troubleshoot any problems.



1. Log into your email and open the email or calendar event with the subject **Virtual Care Appointment - Orientation OR Virtual Care Appointment - Education**.

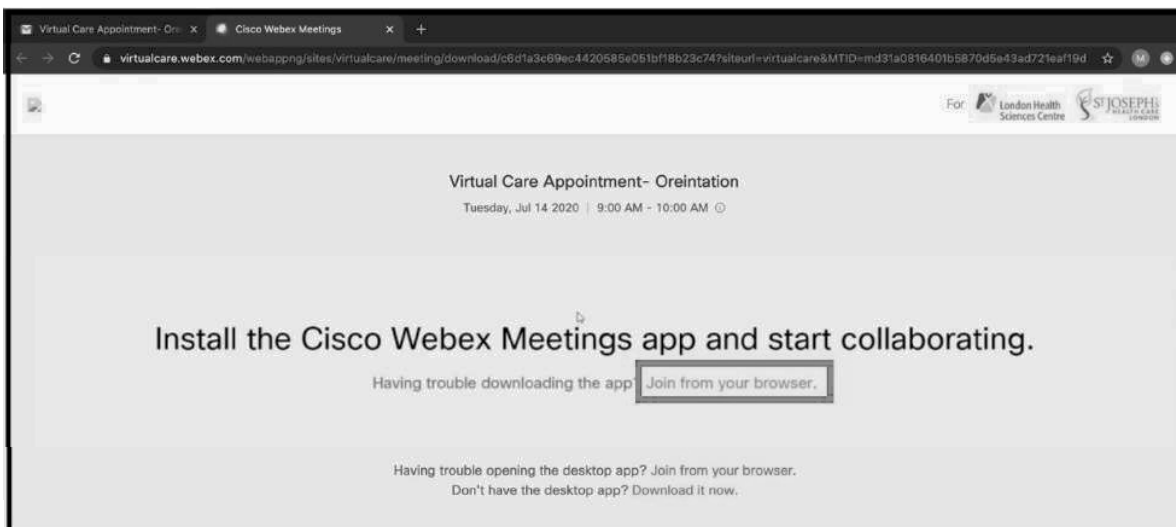


2. Scroll down until you see **Join your virtual care appointment**. Click **Join meeting**



3. WebEx will start and ask you how you want to join the meeting:

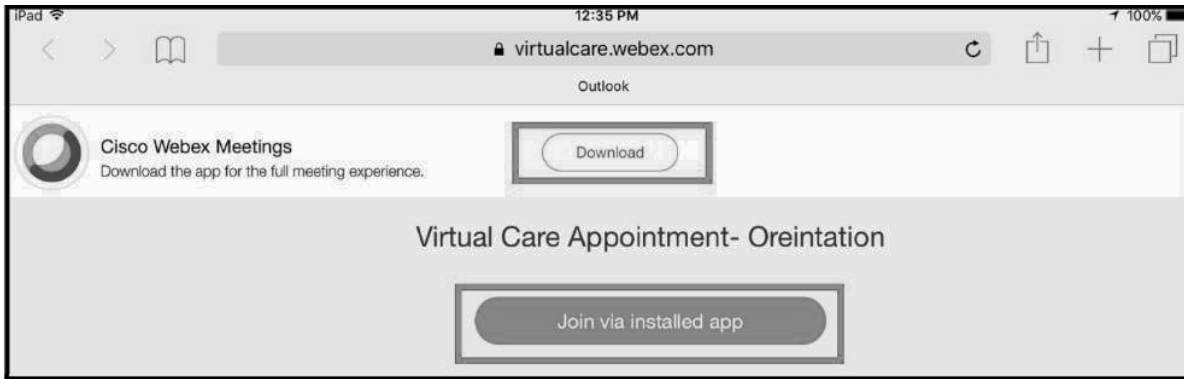
If using a computer, click **Join from Browser**. Webex works best on **Chrome**  or **Firefox** 



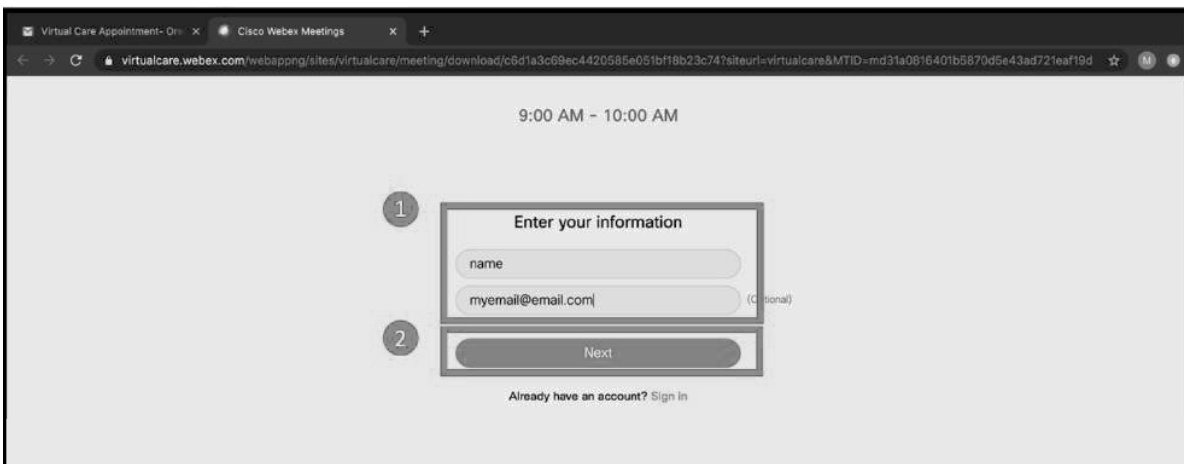
If using a tablet or smartphone, **download Cisco Webex Meetings**. If you already have the app, click **Join via installed app**.

To download **Cisco Webex Meetings**

- i. Click **“Download”**.
- ii. Click **“Open”** in “App Store” or “Google Play”
- iii. Click **“Get” / “Install”**
- iv. Go back to the email invitation and click **“Join”**
- v. Click **“Allow WebEx Meeting to access your microphone and camera”**
- vi. Click **“Next”** when asked to choose how you want to connect to audio
- vii. Click **“OK”** when asked to connect to a Cisco video device

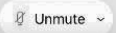


4. Enter your name and email address (optional). Click **Next** or **Join**.



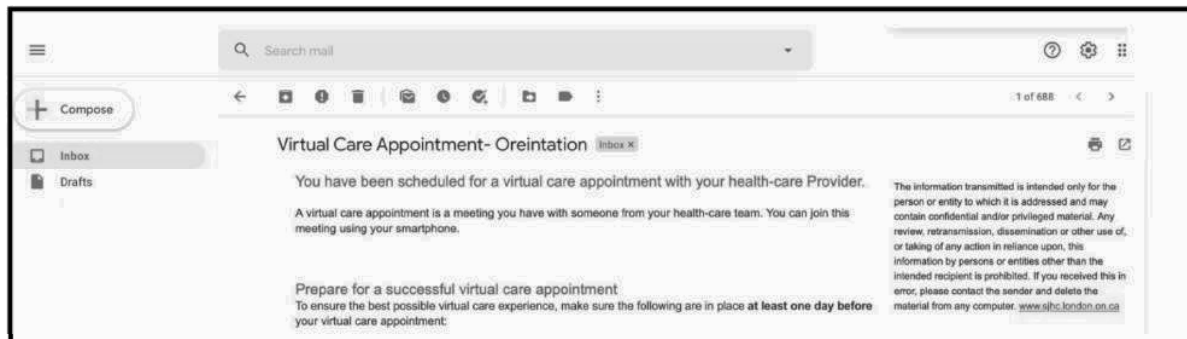
5. Select your preferred audio and video options (grey = on, red = off). Click **Join Meeting**.



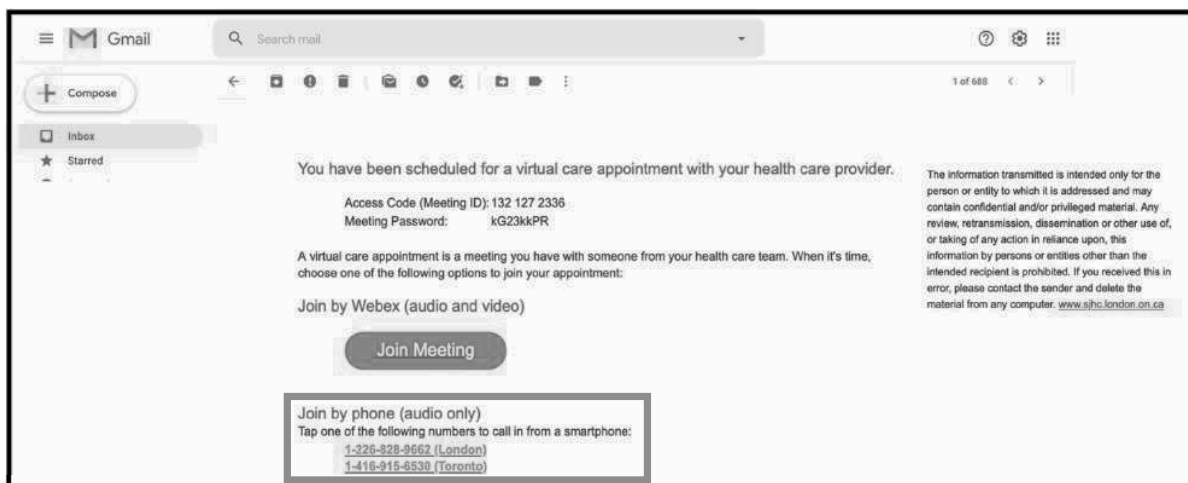
6. To unmute yourself during the session, tap the  Unmute button on the bottom of your screen.

Steps to join by phone (audio only, with email):

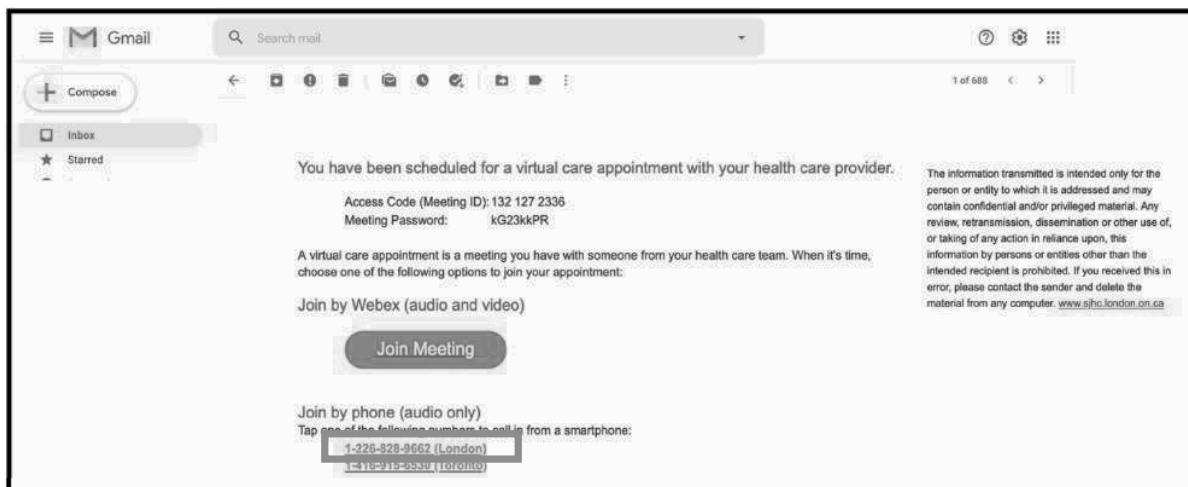
1. Log into your email and open the email or calendar event with the subject **Virtual Care Appointment - Orientation OR Virtual Care Appointment - Education**.



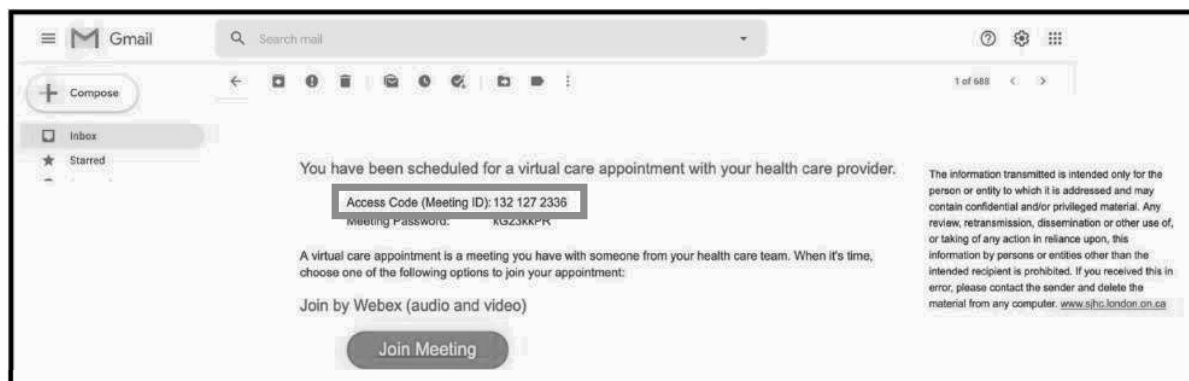
2. Scroll down until you see **Join your virtual care appointment**. Below the **Join meeting** button, you should see **JOIN BY PHONE (AUDIO ONLY)**.



3. Dial the **London phone number** from your cellphone or landline.



4. Enter the **Meeting ID number** (listed near the top of their invitation) followed by **# (pound key/hash tag)**.



5. Click **# (pound key/hash tag)** again to skip through the Attendee ID number question.
6. **To unmute yourself during the session**, click ***** and then the number **6**.

Steps to join by phone (audio only, no email):

1. You will receive a phone called from “Cisco Webex” 0-15 minutes before your sessions is scheduled to start.
2. **To unmute yourself during the session**, click ***** and then the number **6**.

Troubleshooting Tips

Time-lag Between Audio and Video



1. Try logging out and re-joining the session.
2. If that doesn't work, and the delay is causing difficulty, you can mute the video's sound and use your cellphone or landline to call in for the audio instead.
3. Instructions for both options are provided above.

If You Log Out of the Session by Accident



1. Open up your session invitation email.
2. Click on the link or dial the phone number to log in again.

The Group Session Freezes or Disconnects



1. The group leader will shut down the videoconferencing program and re-start the session.
2. Wait 5 minutes, open up your session invitation email, and click on the link or dial the phone number to log in again. If you received a call from Cisco Webex, we will try to call you again.
3. If we can't re-start the video session we will try a backup program.
4. If systems are overwhelmed, we may be done for the day. Your group leader will send out a brief email or phone call with a “group wrap-up”, suggestions, and next steps.

Virtual Orientation and Education: Clinical Issues

Professional Issues



Providing Cardiac Rehabilitation education via videoconferencing is new for us. Making a quick transition to a new format **will** be challenging. If we are patient with each other and expect some glitches, it will make this transition easier.



Attending education from the comfort of your home feels more casual, but web-based resources follows all the rules and regulations guiding face-to-face education.

Clinical Challenges



Virtual care can be challenging for staff providing education. It can be harder to read someone's body language and facial expressions. We may need to "check-in" with you more often during a session to see how we are doing.



Our goal is to have lively group discussion and develop an interactive support network as we do in our hospital program. How are we going to guide and direct group discussions? If you want to jump into the conversation, wave to get our attention, use the chat window, or unmute yourself.



Please do not "multi-task" during sessions (e.g. checking your phone, folding laundry, cooking dinner, typing etc.).



Please speak up if you are having any worrisome health symptoms, or challenges.



If you leave a group session, please let us know via a hand signal, chat or email.

Privacy



Keep in mind that during videoconferencing, staff and other group participants are entering your space. Think about where you will be sitting. What else will the camera show? Is it a neutral background? Will people be able to see personal items that you would rather keep private?



Please dress appropriately for group. No pajamas, please!



We have chosen conferencing platforms that meet stringent standards for privacy, but there are naturally more risks with this format than a face to face meeting. All participants must sign a consent form for participation in web-based treatment.



Recording virtual groups is not permitted. It is a violation of other group members' privacy and breaks provincial privacy laws. If you are worried that might miss or forget important information, please let us know and we will find a way to share information in a way that respects group members' privacy.



Web-based resources are only as confidential as your surroundings. Logging in to an orientation/education session from a crowded room, your backyard, or a public park means that our services are no longer private and confidential.

Safety



For your own safety, please do not log in to an education session if you are walking or driving.



For a live exercise session, please ensure your floor space is clear and there are no tripping hazards. Please have a phone available and/or a support person to call for assistance as needed.



Orientation

Adapted from University Health Network (UHN) Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation Program

Orientation is your opportunity to learn about cardiac rehabilitation (cardiac rehab) and how we will work together over the course of the program. We know that patients have better outcomes (reduced hospitalizations, reduced recurrent cardiac events, reduced mortality) if they participate in and complete our program.

Our goal

To provide you with the tips and tools that you need to understand:

1. What cardiac rehab is and how we can help you
2. What to expect
3. How we can work well together

Once you know what our program is about, we want you to start thinking about what you hope to achieve during your cardiac rehab program.

What is cardiac rehab?

Cardiac rehab is a program that can help you...



Get active and exercise safely



Make healthy food choices



Take care of emotional wellbeing and mental health



Lower risk of heart disease

It also helps you:



Feel better



Have a better quality of life

My Notes:

Research tells us that **patients who participate in cardiac rehab** (attended 67 percent or more scheduled classes) have:



Fewer hospital visits



Fewer heart events in the future



Lower death rate

compared to patients that did not get referred to a cardiac rehab.

Your team

Several team members work together to help you achieve your goals in cardiac rehab.

These team members include:



As the patient, you are the central focus of the team and its most important member.

My Notes:

People living with diabetes

Many patients referred to Cardiac Rehab also live with diabetes. The main source of reliable we recommend to help you live and thrive with diabetes is a website called [Diabetes College](#).

This website can help you to learn:

- What diabetes is and how it impacts your health
- How your diabetes medicines work and help you control your blood sugar
- How to make lifestyle changes to take control of your health



On this website you can also find a guide of information, videos, and tools.

Our journey together...learning to manage your health condition



Imagine a group of people white water rafting. There is a guide in the back, this could be the role of your cardiac rehab team. The rest of the group could be you. Expect there to be some calm waters and some rough rapids. Some things that you will need to do to be healthier in the future will feel easy and some things will feel hard.

Our goal is to learn from each other, share information and experiences, and work together so that by the time you graduate in 6 months you can look back and feel that you:



Learned how to manage your health condition



You are more active, making nutritious food choices, and managing your stress/emotions



My Notes:

Your exercise program

Exercise is a medicine that can help your heart get stronger. A stronger heart will give you a better quality of life, and more energy to do the things you want and/or need to throughout the day.

Research tells us that exercising for at least 30 minutes, 5 days each week will improve your fitness and lower your risk of heart events in the future. A stronger heart will give you a better quality of life.

A balanced exercise program

A balanced exercise program has four key pieces:



Aerobic exercise



Resistance training



Stretching



Daily movement

These pieces fit together to create your optimal dose of exercise.

Sit less and move more

In addition to starting an exercise routine, our goal is to get you thinking about how you can sit less and move more throughout your day.

Research tells us that sitting for long periods of time increases your risk of heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers.



The goal is to try to **break up the time you spend sitting by standing or walking around for 2-3 minutes every hour.**

Sitting less and moving more throughout your day might look like:



Using the stairs instead of the elevator.

My Notes:



Parking further away and walk the rest of the way to the store, an appointment, etc.



Standing or walking on the spot while answering emails or talking on the phone.



Doing housework (clean, mow the lawn, etc.).

Smart watches, fitness trackers (e.g., Fitbit), or apps on your cellphone are a great way to remind you to move and track your activity throughout the day.

Aerobic exercise

Aerobic exercise is one of the most important types of exercise for your heart.

It is any activity that gets your heart beating faster, makes you breathe a little bit harder, and uses large muscles. This type of exercise includes:



Walking



Cycling



Using an elliptical



Swimming



The goal over the next 6 months is to do aerobic exercise for at least 30 minutes, 5 days each week at a moderate intensity.

My Notes:

If you are not used to exercising, you can start off with a short amount of time and build up from there. For example, you can break up your aerobic exercise into smaller 10-minute sessions throughout your day.

Closely follow your exercise prescription given to you by our doctors

You want to make sure that you closely follow your exercise prescription that is given to you. It has been set at a level of effort that will improve your fitness, while keeping your heart safe. You can do this by:

1. **Checking your pulse**
2. **Checking your level of effort during exercise**

Your effort should feel ‘moderate’. At this level of effort, you should be able to talk comfortably but not sing. This is the same as an 11 (fairly light) to 14 (somewhat hard) on the Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE scale).

CARDIAC college		Rating of Perceived Exertion Scale	
6			
7	Very very light		
8			
9	Very light		
10			
11	Fairly light		
12			
13	Somewhat hard		
14			
15	Hard		
16			
17	Very hard		
18			
19	Very very hard		
20			

BORG, G. (1970) Perceived Exertion as an indicator of somatic stress. Scandinavian Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine, 2 (2), p. 92-98

My Notes:

3. Lower your effort if needed

You will know your effort is too high if:



Your pulse is too high (outside of your target heart rate range or what is normal or expected for you)



Your RPE is too high (above 14/somewhat hard)



You have any symptoms

Resistance training

Resistance training strengthens your muscles making your day-to-day activities easier, like carrying groceries or getting up from a chair. It will also improve your fitness and has many health benefits that we will talk about in a future education session.

You can do resistance training with:



Your own body weight



Resistance bands



Free weights/dumbbells



Household objects like soup cans or water bottles



The goal over the next 6 months is to do **resistance training 2-3 times each week**, building up to 10-15 repetitions with 2-3 sets of each exercise.

Stretching and balance

Stretching helps to improve your flexibility and keep your joints moving.

General stretching can be done any time – in the morning to loosen up, at work to relieve stress, after sitting or standing for a long time, or when you feel stiff.

My Notes:

To improve flexibility, we recommend doing:

1. Moving/dynamic stretches before exercise



2. Non-moving/static stretches after exercises



My Notes:



The goal over the next 6 months is to stretch daily, holding each stretch for 15 to 30 seconds.

Exercise safely

When starting a new exercise program, you may experience heart related symptoms, muscle/joint injuries or limitations, and/or live with chronic conditions (e.g., arthritis, osteoporosis, MS, etc.) that can cause symptoms during exercise. Our goal is to help you learn how to exercise safely so that you can avoid symptoms during exercise.

Safety tips to exercise safely



Do not exercise if you are sick or injured. Take time off exercise if you have an infection, cold, or injury until you are back to your normal



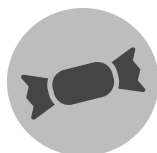
Avoid alcohol, smoking, or marijuana at least 2 hours before exercise. These substances raise your heart rate and blood pressure, which can cause symptoms during exercise



Avoid heavy meals at least 2 hours before exercise. Have a light snack with a good source of protein before exercise so your muscles have the fuel they need



Take your heart medications as prescribed by your doctors. These medications have been prescribed to control your heart rate and blood pressure response to exercise



Carry a fast-acting carbohydrate if you are on medications that can cause low blood sugar. This will help you treat a low blood sugar (less than 5.5) right away



Check the weather so you are prepared. Paying attention to the forecast can help you stay safe while exercising outdoors in hot or cold weather

To avoid problems during exercise:



Warm up before exercise for 5 or more minutes. A warmup helps to slowly increase blood flow out to your exercising muscles, while maintaining good blood flow to your heart.

My Notes:



Closely follow the exercise prescription given to you by your doctors. Your exercise prescription has been set at a level of effort to improve your fitness and keep you safe.



Pay attention to how your body is responding and lower your effort if needed. Your tolerance to exercise can change for a number of reasons.



Cool down after exercise for 5 minutes or more. A cool down helps to keep your legs moving so that blood continues to flow towards your heart and head.

My Notes:

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

How to fill out your exercise diary

Using an exercise diary can help you understand how your body is responding to exercise and track your progress over time. You can do this by writing down the “when”, “where”, “what”, “how much”, and level of effort of your exercise.

	Date	Location Indoor or outdoor	Time of Day	Resting HR	Type of Exercise	Exercise Time (minutes)	RPE	Heart Rate
Day 1	June 1	Outdoor	9:00am	60 bpm	Walking	32	13	90 bpm
					Total steps- 7500			

Resources to help you with an exercise program

Visit www.cardiaccollege.ca to:

- Read [Staying Active for a Healthy Heart](#)
- Watch [Starting an Aerobic Exercise Program THRIVE Video](#)

Remember you will get fitter when you exercise regularly. Take some time over the next few days to start thinking about exercise goals for cardiac rehab.

Please make sure to have your Mini Workbook handy during your first call with your rehab trainer.

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

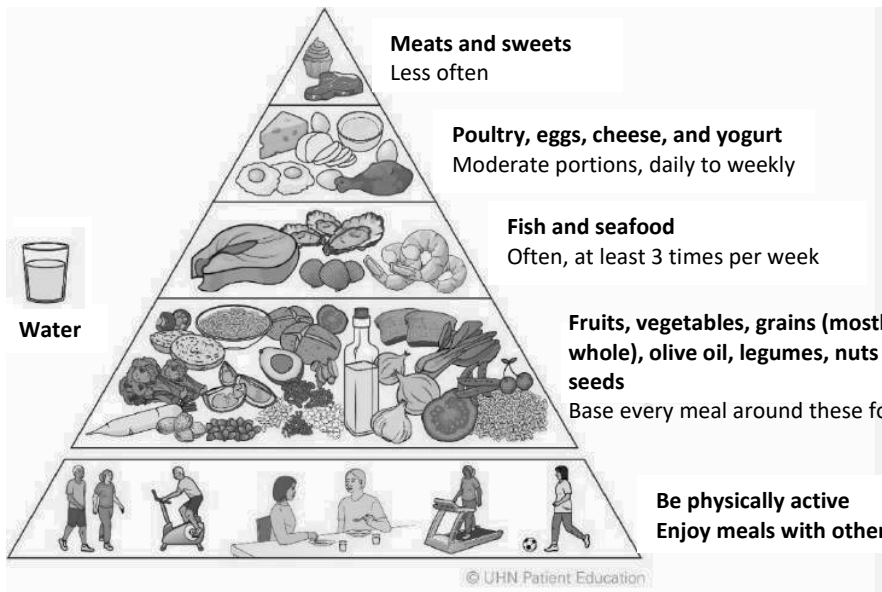
Healthy ways of eating

Eating heart healthy foods can help reduce your risk of future heart events. But sometimes it can be challenging to know which ways of eating are heart healthy.

Eating the Mediterranean way

A great way to build heart healthy eating habits is by using the traditional foods and cooking methods of people who live around the Mediterranean Sea. This way includes eating healthy foods, enjoying meals with others, and living an active lifestyle.

There is no right way to do this. You can choose foods that you like, using the pyramid as your guide. Try choosing foods and activities that are at the bottom of the pyramid every day and those that are closer to the top less often.



Research tells us that people following a heart healthy pattern of eating (like the Mediterranean way) can have a **50 - 70 % lower risk of dying from heart causes.**

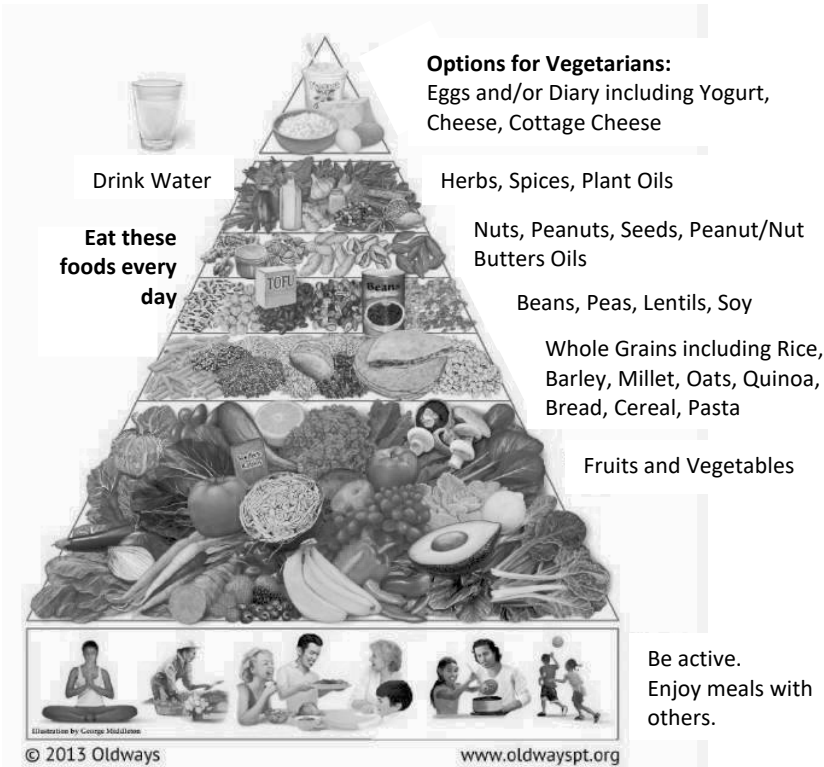
What do these eating patterns have in common?

Outside of the Mediterranean way, there are a number of other heart healthy eating patterns, like the vegetarian or DASH diets. They all have many similarities and benefits.

The best diet pattern for you, is the one you can see yourself sticking to over the long term.

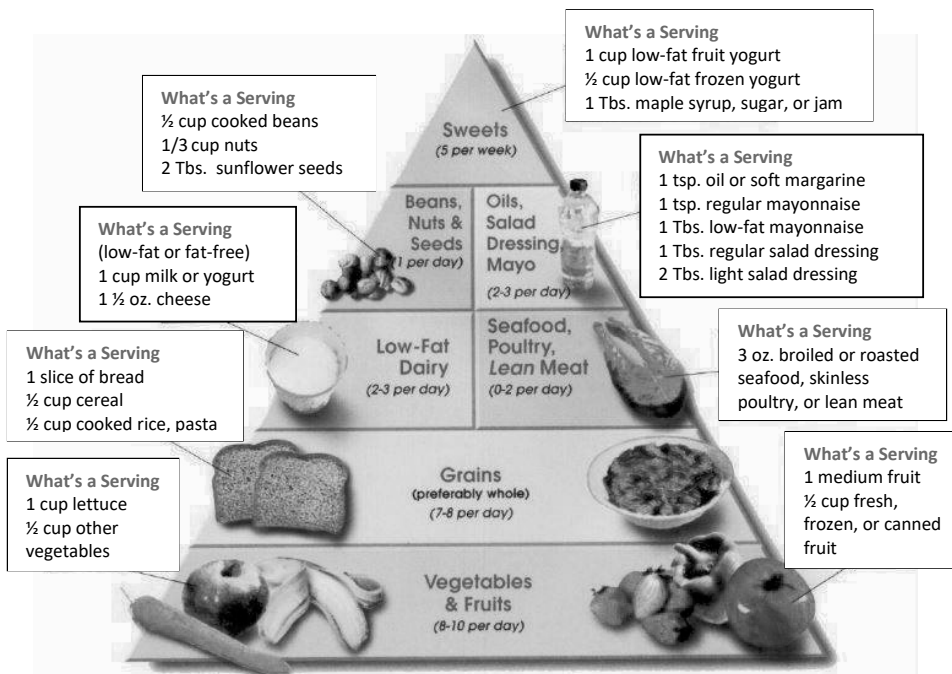
My Notes:

Vegetarian and vegan diet pyramid



My Notes:

DASH diet pyramid



These eating patterns all focus on:

- 1. **Whole foods that come from plants and are less processed.** Try choosing more:



Vegetables and fruits



Nuts and seeds



Whole grains (e.g., brown rice, whole grain bread, steel cut oats, barley, buckwheat, wild rice)



Legumes (e.g., beans, chickpeas, lentils etc.)

- 2. **Eating at home with friends and family.** Try having meals with others to:



Enjoy quality time together



Share traditions around food (e.g., passing traditions on to younger generations and learning about other cultures)



Try new healthy foods that you might not normally eat



Model healthy ways of eating to children and family members

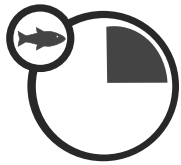
My Notes:

The plate method

Following these ways of eating can be simple when you use Canada's food guide plate, where:



Half (1/2) of your plate is filled with vegetables



One quarter (1/4) of your plate is filled with protein



One quarter (1/4) of your plate is filled with grains and starches

My Notes:

Food intake record

Using a food intake record can help you understand your current eating habits and areas you can work to improve your heart health.

Try recording the food and drinks you eat/drink during 2 weekdays (e.g., Monday and Tuesday) and 1 weekend day (e.g., Saturday).

Food Intake Record

Date:	Day of the Week:						
	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
H (home) A (away)	FOOD AND BEVERAGES <small>Be as specific as possible</small>			Amount	Cooking Method	Fat Used In Cooking	
		1.					
		2.					
		3.					
		4.					
		5.					
		6.					
		7.					
Vitamins:	Yes	No	If yes, TYPE and DOSE:				

Resources to help you make a plan

Part of the self-management skill set is learning how to select reliable sources of health information. Suggested resources for this topic are:

- Fill out the [Mediterranean Diet Score Tool](#) on Cardiac College
- Complete a 3-day food intake record
- Read ‘[Eating Well for a Healthy Heart](#)’ on Cardiac College

How to set goals and action plans

Being able to change your lifestyle habits and keep those changes in place are important to living well with heart disease. Research tells us that the best way to make these changes are to set goals and action plans.



Three simple steps to make a change

There are three steps that you can take to help you change your lifestyle habits and make those changes stick.



Define your **vision** for the future



Set a **goal to work** on that will help you achieve your vision for yourself



Build **weekly action plans** to help you achieve your goal

You can also visit the **THRIVE program** on Cardiac College to view their **Create a Plan for Change** video to learn more.

Your vision for your future

As you begin your journey to creating new healthy habits, it's a good idea to reflect on what you want to feel like, be like, and be able to do.

It can help to reflect on your own values and priorities.

Values: What really matters, to *you*?

Priorities: Answer the 4 questions below to develop your vision

What do you see yourself doing in the future?

Examples:

- I will do all the things I need to do each day
- I will be able to play with my grandchildren
- I will travel

How will you be feeling in the future?

Examples:

- I will feel good
- I will feel healthy
- I will have more energy

My Notes:

Are you healthier in the future? And how do you know?

Examples:

- I am healthier because my blood sugar and blood pressure are lower
- I am healthier because I feel happy and motivated
- I am healthier because I can golf again

Who are the people you are surrounded by in the future?

Examples:

- Family
- Friends
- Colleagues

Your vision – write it down

Once you have a vision, you can write it down in the empty box beside 'your vision'.



Or use the electronic tool on the Cardiac College website.

3. Go to the Cardiac College website.
4. Click on THRIVE 12-week challenge.
5. Click on 'Create a Plan for Change' (it's the first session in the series).
6. Click on 'Plan' and scroll down to 'start my plan'.
7. Click on 'start my plan'.
8. You will be prompted to answer a set of questions.
9. Typing in your answers will generate a handout with all of your information (see example on this slide). You can print it or download and save it.

Your goal

What changes do you need to make to achieve your vision? These are goals that will help you move towards your vision.

My Notes:

When you are trying to decide what goals you want to set, you want to pick a goal that you:



Believe is **important** (supports your vision)



Feel confident that **you can do it**



Feel ready to **work on it**

My Notes:

Your goal – write it down

Once you have a goal, you can write it down in the empty box beside ‘your goal’ or use the online tool that you used to create your vision.

Example: A vision to have more energy and travel with friends can be achieved by setting goals to work on healthy habits, such as to:

- Get more exercise on a regular basis
- Have a restful sleep, most of the time
- Eat in a heart-healthy diet



[Empty rectangular box for writing a goal]

Your action plan for this week – write it down

The final step is to build a weekly action plan to help you reach your goal.

Ask yourself:



What am I going to do?



When am I going to do it?



Where am I going to do it?



How much am I going to do it?



How often am I going to do it?

My Notes:

Action plan example for goal 1: get more exercise on a regular

**Your
Action
Plan**

This week I will:

Go walking _____ (What)

Mon, Wed & Fri, 11 am _____ (When)

The park _____ (Where)

15 minutes _____ (How much)

3 times, by this time next week _____ (How often)

My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:

1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10

Not very confident Very confident

If you rated your confidence as lower than a 7, try changing the goal so that you are setting yourself up for success.

Once you have your action plan, you can write it down in the empty box beside 'your action plan' or use the online tool that you used to create your vision.

**Your
Action
Plan**

This week I will:

_____ (What)

_____ (When)

_____ (Where)

_____ (How much)

_____ (How often)

My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not very confident Very confident

Your action plan – reflect on it

Once you've tried out your action plan, it's important to learn from your efforts. Especially if you ran into problems. **Ask yourself these 3 questions to reflect on the past week:**

1. What went well with you action plan? What felt good?

My Notes:

2. What did not go as planned with you action plan?

3. What challenges or problems got in your way?

If you achieved your action plan - great! Now make a new plan for the coming week to keep moving toward your goal.

If your action plan did not go as planned, don't worry. This is normal. **Instead, use this as a chance to learn and problem solve.**

If setting goals and action plans are new to you, don't worry! During your cardiac rehab journey, our goal is to help you build the skills that you need to apply these steps to different healthy habits.

Your next steps in cardiac rehab

- 1. You will receive an email or phone call from our program (Cardiac Rehab SJHC) within the next 48 hours informing you of the date and time of a phone call appointment with one of our rehab trainers.
- 2. If you do not receive this email or phone call, or if you need to re-schedule the appointment, please call 519 646-6100, ext. 77000.
- 3. During this phone call appointment with one of our rehab trainers, you will be booked into your 12-week series of education sessions.



Exercise Safely

Adapted from University Health Network (UHN) Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation Program

When starting a new exercise program, you may experience heart related symptoms, muscle/joint injuries or limitations, and/or live with chronic conditions (e.g., arthritis, osteoporosis, MS, etc.) that can cause symptoms during exercise.

Our goal

To provide you with the tips and tools that you need to:

1. Exercise safely
2. Manage angina symptoms

Safety tips to exercise safely



Do not exercise if you are sick or injured. Take time off exercise if you have an infection, cold, or injury until you are back to your normal



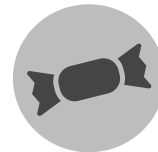
Avoid alcohol, smoking, or marijuana at least 2 hours before exercise. These substances raise your heart rate and blood pressure, which can cause to symptoms during exercise



Avoid heavy meals at least 2 hours before exercise. Have a light snack with a good source of protein before exercise so your muscles have the fuel they need



Take your heart medications as prescribed by your doctors. These medications have been prescribed to control your heart rate and blood pressure response to exercise



Carry a fast-acting carbohydrate if you are on medications that can cause low blood sugar. This will help you treat a low blood sugar (less than 5.5) right away if it happens



Check the weather so you are prepared. Paying attention to the forecast can help you stay safe while exercising outdoors in hot or cold weather

My Notes:

Week 1



As a general rule, **stay indoors if the temperature is below -10°C (15°F)**. If this is the case, you may need to plan to exercise indoors, such as mall walking, or using a treadmill.

My Notes:



Dress in layers and cover your mouth. Try dressing in layers that will: keep you dry and warm, protect you from wet and windy conditions, and protect your head, hands and feet.



Reduce your speed and distance. Allow your body to get used to the weather conditions by choosing to do a shorter distance or a slower pace of walking.



Wear ice spikes over your boots or use walking poles. Walking on icy or snow-covered surfaces increases your risk of slipping and falling. Using these or similar devices can help reduce your risk of falling.



Walk indoors. If it is too cold to exercise outdoors, there are lots of places you can exercise indoors. Try mall walking, using an exercise video, or using home exercise equipment.



Avoid Snow Shoveling. The fitness level needed to snow shovel is about the same as what you need to do a fast-continuous run. Combine this level of effort with cold weather conditions and heavy snow and, you can put yourself at risk for another heart event.

Make an action plan for exercising indoors

Your Action Plan	This week I will:	
	_____	(What)
	_____	(When)
	_____	(Where)
	_____	(How much)
	_____	(How often)
My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:		
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		
Not very confident	Very confident	



To avoid problems during exercise:

Follow these tips to decide if it is safe to exercise outdoors:



Warm up before exercise for 5 or more minutes. A warmup helps to slowly increase blood flow out to your exercising muscles, while maintaining good blood flow to your heart



Closely follow the exercise prescription given to you by your doctors. Your exercise prescription has been set at a level of effort to improve your fitness and keep you safe



Pay attention to how your body is responding and lower your effort if needed. Your tolerance to exercise can change for a number of reasons



Cool down after exercise for 5 minutes or more. A cool down helps to keeps your legs moving so that blood continues to flow towards your heart, head, and working muscles.



Drink water before, during, and after exercise (unless you are on a fluid restriction). If you are on a fluid restriction, please follow the instructions that have been given to you by your doctor

Follow your exercise prescription closely

1. Check your pulse / heart rate



Helps you understand how hard your heart is working during exercise.

2. Effort should feel moderate



Fairly light (RPE 11) to somewhat hard (RPE 14).



Talk comfortably but not sing.

3. Lower effort if needed



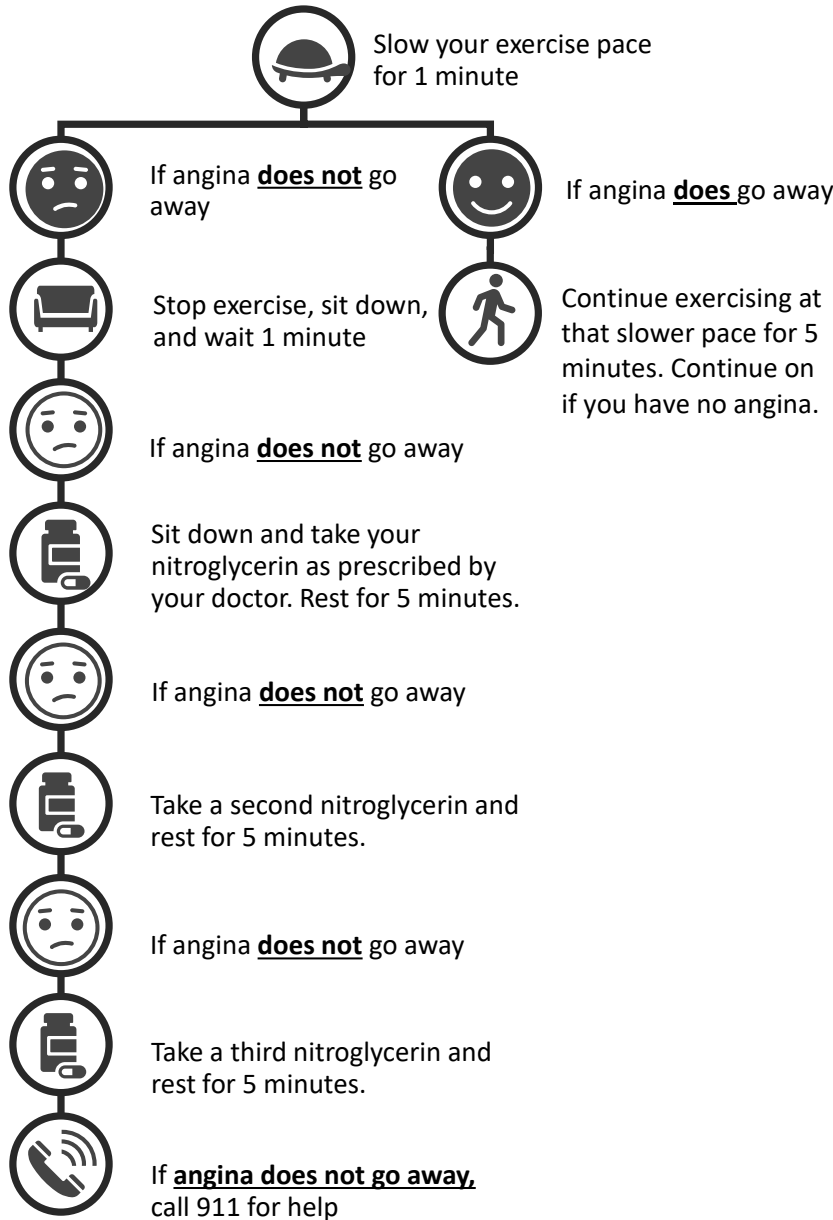
Effort (RPE is over 14) or pulse is too high.



Symptoms.

My Notes:

How to manage angina during exercise



My Notes:

How to check your pulse / heart rate



Find your pulse*



Count your heartbeat for 10 seconds



Multiply by 6.

Be sure to record your pulse on your exercise diary

*You can also check your pulse using your neck. Place 2 to 3 fingers on the side of your neck beside your Adam’s apple in the hollow area. Apply light pressure to avoid becoming dizzy.

My Notes:

How to use your stopwatch



It is important to time your exercise so that you know the intensity of your exercise for the distance you covered. Try using a stopwatch, fitness tracker, or app.

How to fill out your exercise diary

Using an exercise diary can help you understand how your body is responding to exercise and track your progress over time. You can do this by writing down the “when”, “where”, “what”, “how much”, and level of effort of your exercise.

June 1	Outdoor	9:00am	60 bpm	Walking	32	13	90 bpm	
				Total steps- 7500				
June 2	Indoor	9:00am	60 bpm	Treadmill / 2.5 kmh / 1.0% incline	30	13	90 bpm	
				Total steps - 7500				

Let’s build a SMART goal for this week

When choosing a goal make sure it is:



Specific. Write down the details of your goal.



Measurable. How will you know you reached your goal?



Achievable. Can you do what it takes to reach your goal? Is it too hard?





How Your Heart Works

Adapted from University Health Network (UHN) Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation Program

Being an active self-manager is key to living well with heart disease. This means learning the skills to take care of your health. One important skill is knowing how your heart works.

Our goal

To provide you with the information that you need to know:

1. How your heart works
2. Where to find information about your own specific heart condition
3. How to ask your doctor questions about your heart

What does the heart do?



The Heart is a muscular pump about the size of your fist. It pumps oxygen-rich blood around your body



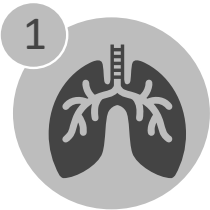
Every cell in the body needs a constant supply of oxygen to function properly and stay alive



Each heartbeat sends oxygen-rich blood around your body

How does the heart work?

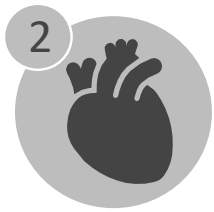
Every cell in your body requires oxygen rich blood to function properly and stay alive. It's your heart's job to make sure this happens – how does it do that?



1 Every time we take a breath of air, it goes into our lungs. Oxygen moves from the air in the lungs into the blood vessels around the lungs. This makes the blood-rich in oxygen.

My Notes:

Week 2



Oxygen-rich blood flows to the left atrium (upper left part of the heart). It then moves from the left atrium to the bottom left of the heart, called the left ventricle



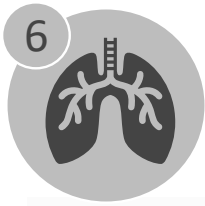
The left ventricle then pumps this oxygen-rich blood to your body. As the blood you blood vessels, it supplies every cell in your body with oxygen rich blood



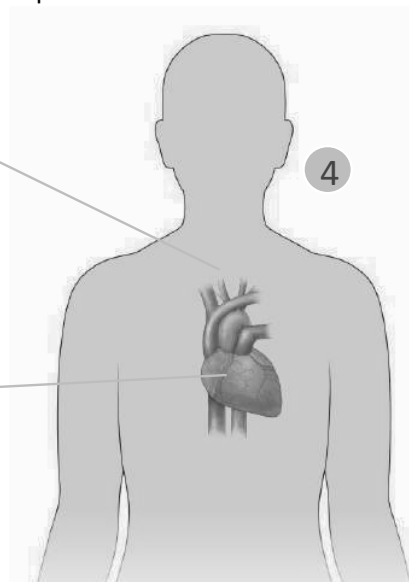
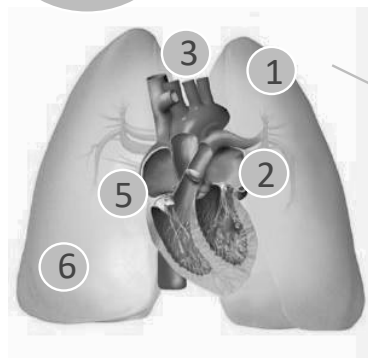
The cells take the oxygen from the blood and use it to make energy. At this point, the blood becomes oxygen-poor



Oxygen-poor blood flows back to the upper right chamber called the right atrium. The blood is pumped to the right ventricle. Then the right ventricle pumps the blood back to the lungs



The blood picks up another load of oxygen from the lungs. The blood becomes oxygen-rich again, and the process repeats

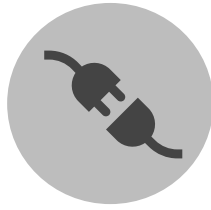


My Notes:

Your heart has three systems to help it pump blood:



A pumping system



An electrical system

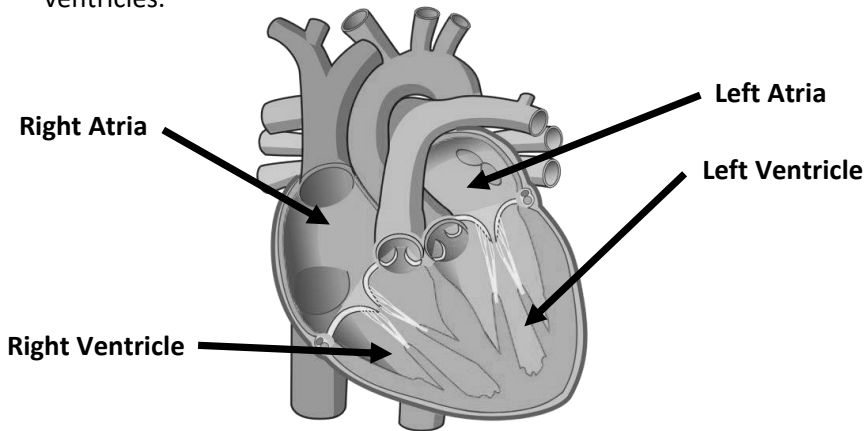


A blood supply

My Notes:

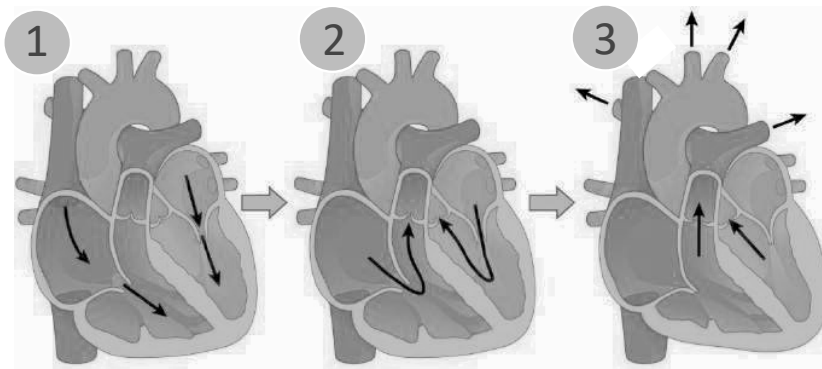
Pump

The pumping system of your heart is made up of 4 chambers. Two on the top, called the atria, and two on the bottom, called the ventricles.



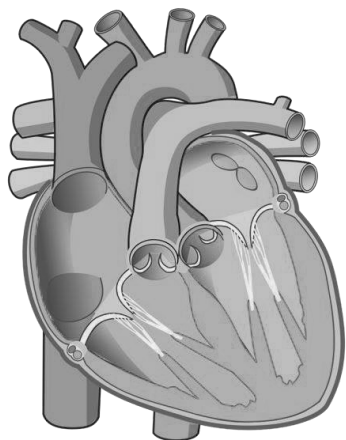
Blood is pumped through these chambers by:

- 1. The chambers filling with blood when your heart is resting
- 2. Pumping blood out to the rest of your body when your heart contracts (squeezes)
- 3. The left ventricle is the main pump, sending oxygen-rich blood to your brain and body

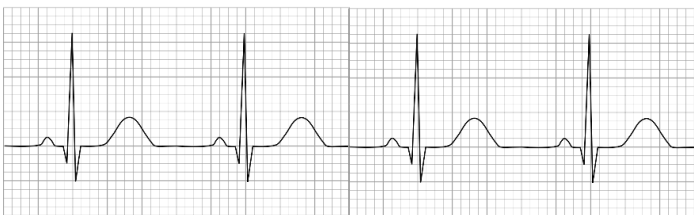


Electrical system

To make your heart pump, it is stimulated by a tiny spark of electricity generated by a special group of cells in your right atrium. As the electrical spark passes over your heart, the chambers contract to move the blood.

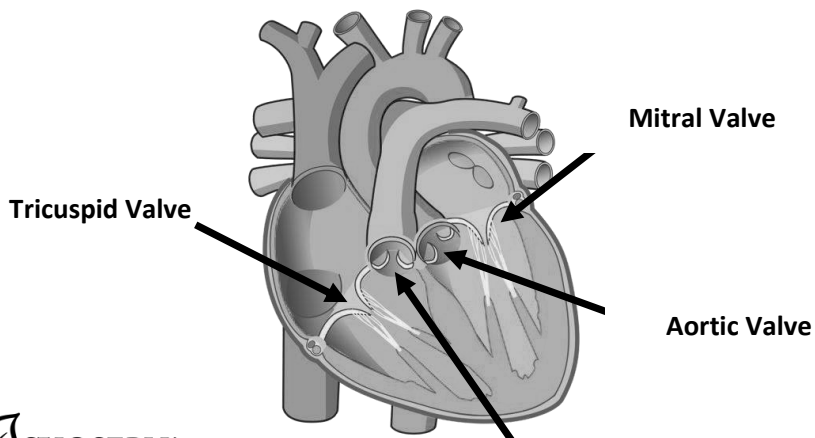


We can record the electricity with an ECG to make sure that everything is working as it's supposed to. This is called your heart's rhythm.



Valves

There are 4 valves in your heart that help control the flow of blood. They are called the tricuspid, pulmonary, mitral, and aortic. They open and close, much like doors, to control the flow of blood.

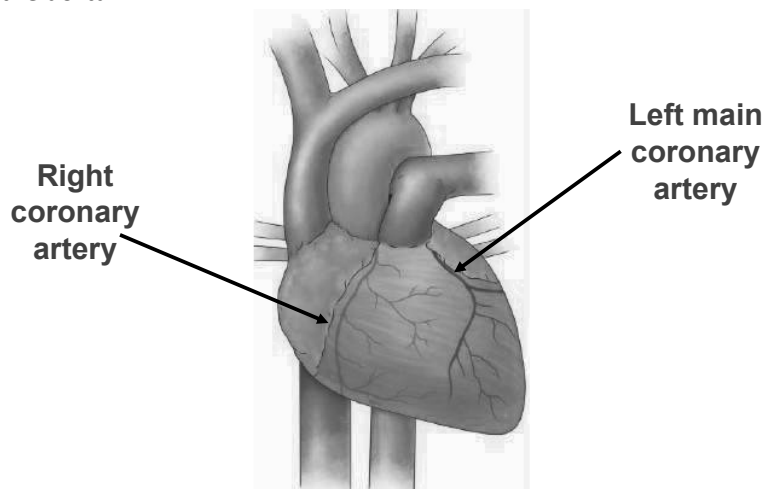


My Notes:

Blood supply

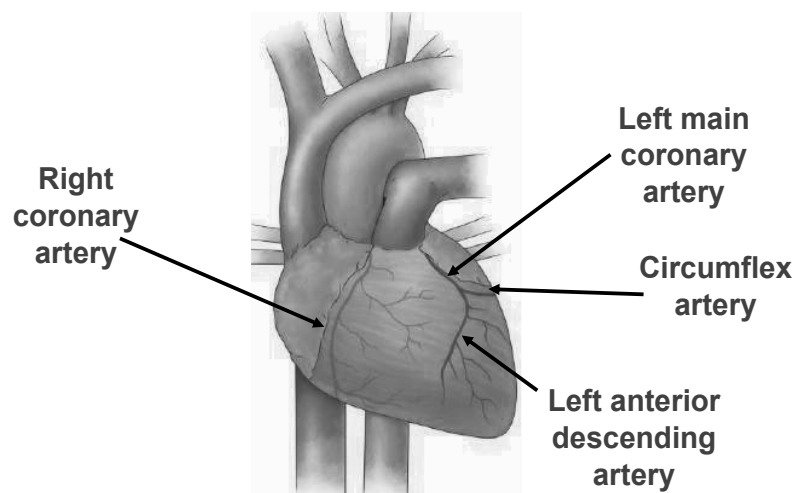
Like every cell in your body, the ones that make up your heart need a constant supply of oxygen-rich blood to make sure it works properly. Let's take a closer look at how that happens.

Oxygen-rich blood is brought to your heart through your coronary arteries. The right and left coronary arteries come off of the aorta.



The left coronary artery branches off into the:

1. left anterior descending artery
2. circumflex artery



These arteries all branch off into smaller arteries (like the roots of a tree) and eventually supply all the oxygen-rich blood your heart needs.

My Notes:

...Unless something happens to block the arteries

Coronary artery disease is the most common type of heart disease. It happens when something damages the lining of the artery.

What can damage your artery lining?



Cigarette smoke



High cholesterol



High blood pressure



Poorly controlled diabetes



Chronic stress



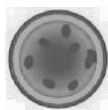
Low fitness



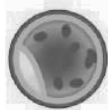
Processed and high-fat foods

All these 'cardiac risk factors' increase inflammation in your body. Normally, inflammation goes away on its own after your body has recovered from stress, illness, or injury. But, these 'risk factors' cause constant inflammation that weakens or damages the artery walls in your heart.

Once a section of arterial wall is weakened or damaged, a number of things happen:



Smooth muscle cells start to grow through the weakened area to try and reinforce it



Calcium starts getting dumped

My Notes:



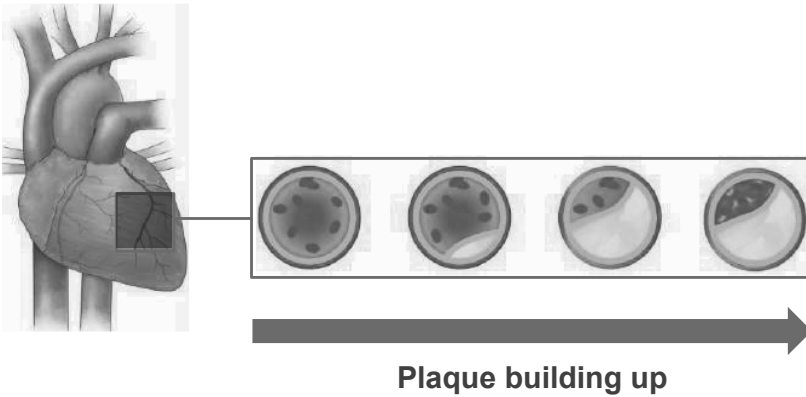
Extra cholesterol is then dumped into the weakened arterial wall



White blood cells carrying extra cholesterol can be dumped too

It's just like sweeping dust under a rug. A little bit of dust isn't a huge deal, but if you add a little bit day after day after day, it'll start to pile up and form a mound under the carpet.

This leaves less and less room for the blood to flow. Eventually the heart cells can't get the amount of oxygen they need to work.



If heart cells can't get the oxygen they need, the heart might:



Not pump as strong as it should



Complain that there is a problem by causing pain (angina)

When a heart cell can't get the oxygen it needs for a long time, it will die...when that happens it's called a heart attack.

How can exercise help?



It decreases inflammation and plaque buildup in your arteries



It helps your heart make more blood vessels to bypass any small arteries that are clogged

My Notes:

How to ask your doctor questions about your heart

Learning about how your heart works, might prompt some questions. There are great tools available to help you organize your questions and concerns for your care team. Filling out one of these tools before you go to your next doctor's visit will help you make the best use of your time together.

PACE Guide Sheet

To Help You Prepare for Your Doctor Visits



Your Name: _____ Doctor: _____	
Appointment date: _____ Time: _____	
Remember: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bring a list of all your medicines, including over-the-counter medicines, dietary supplements, vitamins and herbs. ✓ Ask for a copy of test results or reports about procedures (such as ECG). 	
Reason(s) for the appointment: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Questions about your condition: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Describe your symptoms and concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Questions about your tests or procedures: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
What you hope can be done to help you: _____ _____ _____	Questions about your medicines: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
What you hope can be done to help you: _____ _____ _____	Questions about other treatments: _____ _____ _____

During the visit, clarify what you hear:

- ✓ If you don't understand something, ask the doctor to explain.
- ✓ Repeat the doctor's instructions using your own words.
- ✓ At the end of the visit, review what you and the doctor agreed upon.

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Let's build a SMART goal for this week

When choosing a goal make sure it is:



Specific. Write down the details of your goal



Measurable. How will you know you reached your goal?



Achievable. Can you do what it takes to reach your goal? Is it too hard?



Relevant. Make sure the goal is something you want to do



Timely. When do you plan on reaching this goal? Have you given yourself enough time?

Example: I would like to add one serving of vegetables at lunch and dinner every day.

Write down a specific SMART Goal you would like to work on for this week:

Your
Action
Plan

This week I will:

_____ (What)

_____ (When)

_____ (Where)

_____ (How much)

_____ (How often)

My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not very confident						Very confident			

Remember:

If your rating is 7 or higher, great! You believe you can do this!

If your rating is less than 7, then you may want to:

- Learn more about the area you want to work on or prepare yourself to work on that area
- Take smaller steps towards your goals. For example, you may adjust the different parts of your action plan such as “how much” or “how often”

My Notes:



Know Your Risk Factors

Adapted from University Health Network (UHN) Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation Program

Week 3

Being an active self-manager is key to living well with heart disease. This means learning the skills to take care of your health.

Our goal

To provide the information you need to know what:

1. Your risk factors for heart disease are
2. Action you can take to help manage these risk factors

What are cardiac risk factors?



Are individual features that make it more likely that you will develop heart disease



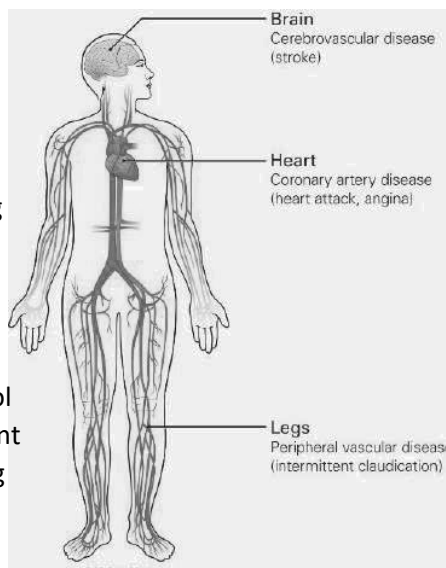
Can increase the chances that any heart disease you already have will progress



The more heart risk factors you have, the higher your risk of developing heart disease

Why are risk factors important?

1. Risk factors can make the plaque buildup in your arteries worse over time
2. Plaque can block blood flow in those arteries, decreasing the amount of blood and oxygen getting to the heart, brain, or lower legs
3. It's important to take control of your risk factors to prevent this process from happening



My Notes:

Types of risk factors?

There are two different types of risk factors:

Ones you can't change. We sometimes call these non-modifiable risk factors. They include things like:



Age



Sex



Congenital (people who may be born with a heart problem)



Ethnicity



Family History

Ones you can change. We sometimes call these modifiable risk factors. They include things like:



Fitness



Cholesterol, Triglycerides



Blood Sugar



Blood Pressure



Waist Size



Stress / Depression / Poor Sleep



Alcohol



Smoking

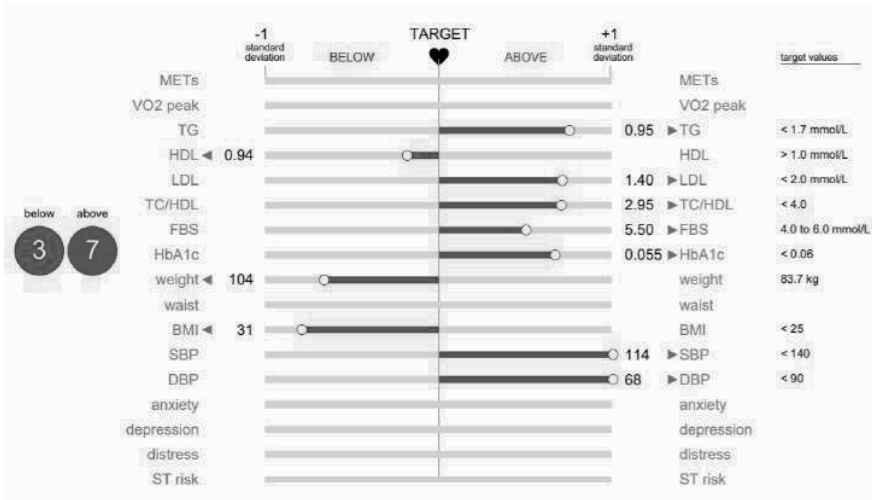
The good news is, you can take control of your modifiable risk factors by building healthy habits into your everyday routine.

My Notes:

Risk factor profile

The first step in taking control of your modifiable risk factors (things you can change) is to find out what they are.

To help you do this, you can use a risk factor profile.



On the profile you will find the modifiable risk factors for heart disease, the target levels of each risk factor, and your own levels.

Our goal is to help you work toward healthy targets using lifestyle habits, medicines, and support from our team.

What Targets Should You Be Working Towards?

Low fitness



A Low level of fitness is related to various diseases and early death



Raise your level of fitness as much as possible

Poor cholesterol profile



Often people with high cholesterol have blockages in their arteries



LDL cholesterol less than 2 mmol/L

HDL cholesterol greater than 1 mmol/L

Triglycerides less than 1.7 mmol/L

My Notes:

High blood sugar



Damages the arteries and nerves in the body



No diabetes: A1c less than 6%

Pre-diabetes: A1c less than 6.5%

Living with diabetes: A1c less than 7%

My Notes:

Seven horizontal lines for taking notes.

High blood pressure



Damages the walls of arteries



No diabetes: Less than 140/90 mmHg

Living with diabetes: Less than 130/80 mmHg

Seven horizontal lines for taking notes.

Waist size



Extra fat around your waist changes how your body uses fat and sugar



Depends on sex and ethnicity

**General
Guideline**

Men less than 102cm (40")

Women less than 88cm (35")

**European, Sub-Saharan African,
Eastern Mediterranean, and Middle
Eastern**

Men less than 94cm (38")

Women less than 80cm (32")

**South Asian, Chinese,
Japanese, South and Central
American**

Men less than 90cm (36")

Women less than 80cm (32")

Seven horizontal lines for taking notes.

Stress / depression / poor sleep



Stress puts an extra burden (work) on your heart and raises blood pressure, blood sugar, and triglycerides



Coping well and managing your stress

Seven horizontal lines for taking notes.

Alcohol



Alcohol is related to many health problems



Minimize the amount you drink

There has been confusion around safe levels of alcohol. Research shows that **there is no safe level of alcohol**. Any small health benefits are significantly offset by the risk of developing cancer. This risk is seen with 1 drink per day and **dramatically increases with each additional drink per day**

My Notes:

Horizontal lines for taking notes

Smoking



Smoking damages arteries and makes the heart work harder



0 cigarettes each day

Avoid second-hand smoke

What healthy habits can help?

We strongly encourage you to discuss your risk factor profile with your doctor. Adopting some of these healthy habits can help you control your risk factors, including:



Taking your medicines as prescribed by your doctor

By taking your medicines regularly and exactly as your doctor prescribed, you can take control of these risk factors:



Blood pressure



Cholesterol



Blood sugar



Depression



Exercise is important for everyone, regardless of your age.

Building in both aerobic training and resistance training is ideal for treating your risk factors.

Exercise can control the following risk factors:



Blood sugar – exercise helps the insulin in your body open the doors on each muscle cell. This allows the sugar to enter the muscle and be used for energy



Blood pressure – exercise lowers your resting blood pressure after every session. Over time, you can reduce your resting blood pressure throughout the day



Waist Measurement – regular exercise allows you to burn calories, and with proper nutrition, can affect where you carry your extra weight



Cholesterol – aerobic training can help to raise your good/healthy cholesterol (HDL cholesterol)



Smoking – for those wanting to quit, exercise can offset some of the withdrawal symptoms and weight gain

My Notes:



Eating a heart healthy diet.

A heart healthy diet includes:



Plenty of fruit and vegetables



Eating high fibre foods



Cutting back on salt or high salt/sodium foods



Eating more healthy fats

You can do this by focusing on eating more plant-based foods, less packaged foods, and eating at home more often.

When we are busy making changes to our diet and exercise, and especially when we are recovering after a heart event, we often forget to look after **our mental health and wellbeing**.



If you are feeling anxious, stressed, or emotional about your cardiac rehab, talk to us. We are here to help



If you need help quitting let us know. We can provide you with smoking cessation resources

Remember small changes to manage your risk factors can make a big difference to your health and overall quality of life.

Resources to help you take action

Part of the self-management skill set is learning how to take action. Follow these steps to take control of your own risk factors:



Talk to your doctor about your risk factor profile



Read the tip sheets found in the Cardiac College booklet, [“How Your Heart Works and Common Types of Heart Problems”](#), to understand more about the risk factor you want to work on



Make an action plan for change and write it down

Remember, making these types of changes takes time. Take it slow. Build on small successes and know that we, along with you doctor, are here to help you.

If you would like to learn more about risk factors for heart disease you can select the [‘Treat Heart Disease’](#) tab on Cardiac College.

Let’s build a SMART goal for this week

When choosing a goal make sure it is:



Specific. Write down the details of your goal



Measurable. How will you know you reached your goal?



Achievable. Can you do what it takes to reach your goal?
Is it too hard?



Relevant. Make sure the goal is something you want to do

My Notes:



Timely. When do you plan on reaching this goal? Have you given yourself enough time?

Example: I would like to add one serving of vegetables at lunch and dinner every day.

Write down a specific SMART Goal you would like to work on for this week:

Your Action Plan	This week I will:									
	_____	(What)								
	_____	(When)								
	_____	(Where)								
	_____	(How much)								
	_____	(How often)								
My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not very confident							Very confident			

My Notes:

Remember:
If your rating is 7 or higher, great! You believe you can do this!

If your rating is less than 7, then you may want to:

- Learn more about the area you want to work on or prepare yourself to work on that area
- Take smaller steps towards your goals. For example, you may adjust the different parts of your action plan such as “how much” or “how often”

Resources to help you learn more about risk factors

Part of the self-management skill set is learning how to select reliable sources of health information. Suggested resources for this topic on Cardiac College are:

- [Treat Heart Disease – Cardiac College](#)

Next week’s topic: how to progress your exercise

If you would like to read ahead, check out these resources on Cardiac College:

- [Get Active: ‘Staying Active for a Healthy Heart’](#) pages 16-17, 28-30



How to Progress Your Exercise Program

Adapted from University Health Network (UHN) Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation Program

After starting a new exercise program, you might start to find that the same distance, speed, or length of exercise is getting easier. Knowing how to progress your exercise will help you continue to build a healthy and strong heart.

Our goal

To provide you with the tips and tools that you need to know:

1. Why progressing your exercise is important
2. When and how to do this safely

Why is progressing your exercise important?

Our bodies adapt to changes. When you introduce something new to your body, like exercise, it might feel challenging at first. But after a few weeks, your body starts to get used to the exercise and it starts to feel easier.

Progressing your exercise will continue to improve your fitness. Improved fitness is related to a better quality of life and a lower risk of future heart events.



Why Should You Progress My Exercise?

It's important to remember that your body will get used to your exercise program. This means that to keep improving your fitness you need to change your exercise or make it more challenging.

Some signs that your body is getting used to your exercise program include:



Your breathing gets easier



Your heart rate is lower during exercise



Your level of effort is 'easier' than before (RPE)

My Notes:

Week 4

Are you ready to progress your exercise?

My Notes:

You are ready to progress your exercise when all of the following points are true for you:



You rate your exercise as **easy or fairly light (RPE < 11)**



Your exercise heart rate is **below your target**



You want to exercise **longer**



You want to **try different types** of exercise



You want to increase your **fitness**



You have **new goals** you want to achieve

You are **not ready to progress your exercise** if any of the following points are true for you:



Current exercise is **challenging (RPE > 14)**



Feel **unwell**



Recently **changed or started new medicines**



Change in weather (including when you travel)



Muscle or joint **injury**



Heart rate is above your target



Major life **event**

How to progress your aerobic exercise?

Once you determine that you are ready to move forward, you can do one of the following:



Increase how often you do it

- Try walking 4 days a week, instead of doing 3 days a week



Increase how much effort it is

- Try adding periods of faster walking (interval training)



Increase how long you do it for

- Try walking at the same steady pace you have been, but instead of walking for 20 minutes, try to increase it to 30 minutes



Try a different kind of exercise

- Trying biking, elliptical, swimming, rowing etc. Ask your rehab trainer for specific instructions for different modes or interval training before you graduate

You also want to **move more and sit less!**



Start **increasing your steps per day by 500-1000**, with the goal of build to 7000+ steps per day

Remember to keep tracking your heart rate and how you feel whenever you make changes to your exercise routine.

How to progress your resistance training?

Once you decide that you are ready to move forward, you can do one of the following:



Increase how many repetitions you do

- Try doing 12 or 15 reps in each set, instead of doing 10 reps



Increase how much weight or resistance you do

- Try to slowly increase the weight by about 2 to 3 pounds at a time. If you are using bands, increase the resistance of the band colour slowly

My Notes:



Increase how many sets you do

- Try to do 3 sets, instead of 2 sets



Increase how many times a week you do it

- Try to do it 3 days a week, instead of 2



Add new exercises

- Try adding new exercises that use the same muscle groups



Change out exercies

- Try different exercise that use the same muscle groups or alternate upper and lower body days

Rember each muscle group will be ready to progress at different times, don't progress if you do not feel comfortable doing the exercise.

How to progress your stretching and balance?

Once you determine that you are ready to progress your stretching and balance routine you can do **one of the following:**



Increase how many sets you do

- Try repeating the stretches 2 ro 3 times per session



Increase how many times a week you do it

- Try to do it 3 days a week, instead of 2



Add new exercises

- Try adding new exercises that use the same muscle groups



Change out exercies

- Try different exercise that use the same muscle groups alternate upper and lower body days



Try Yoga, Pilates, or Tai Chi

- Try an online video or class to help you lengthen and stretch your muscles in a fun and safe way

My Notes:

How often should I progress my exercise program?

This depends on how long you have been doing regular exercise.

In the first 3 to 6 months of starting an exercise program, progression may happen every two to three weeks. After about 6 months of regular exercise, you will notice that changes in your exercise program will take place less often. Once you reach this stage, the goal is to keep your exercise program going for the long-term.

Let's take a minute to reflect

Think about whether you are ready to progress your exercise program.

Remember:

- Your long-term goals
- Your safety
- How you rate your exercise right now (is it too easy?)
- Whether you want to progress your aerobic or resistance or both

How would you progress your aerobic exercise?



How would you progress your resistance training?



How would you progress stretching or balance exercises?



My Notes:

Let's build a SMART goal for this week

When choosing a goal make sure it is:



Specific. Write down the details of your goal



Measurable. How will you know you reached your goal?



Achievable. Can you do what it takes to reach your goal? Is it too hard?



Relevant. Make sure the goal is something you want to do



Timely. When do you plan on reaching this goal? Have you given yourself enough time?

Example: I would like to add one serving of vegetables at lunch and dinner every day.

Write down a specific SMART Goal you would like to work on for this week:

Your Action Plan

This week I will:

_____ (What)

_____ (When)

_____ (Where)

_____ (How much)

_____ (How often)

My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
 Not very confident Very confident

Remember:

If your rating is 7 or higher, great! You believe you can do this!

If your rating is less than 7, then you may want to:

- Learn more about the area you want to work on or prepare yourself to work on that area
- Take smaller steps towards your goals. For example, you may adjust the different parts of your action plan such as “how much” or “how often”

My Notes:



How to Set Goals and Action Plans

Adapted from University Health Network (UHN) Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation Program

Being a self-manager is important to living well with heart disease. Self-management means you take an active role in your health and healthcare. Sometimes being a self-manager means making heart healthy changes. Research tells us that the best way to make these changes are by setting goals and action plans.

Our goal

To help you:

1. Identify how to write your vision, goals, and action plans
2. Know where to find tools to help you with your goal setting, and action planning

Why is this information important to me?

Even when you know that a new healthy habit can improve your health, it is not always easy to make a change.

When you plan your health goals and small steps to achieve them, you are more likely to succeed and create lifelong habits. You can do this by taking three simple steps.

Three Simple Steps to Make a Change



Create a **vision for yourself** for the future



Choose **one goal to work on** that will help you achieve your vision for yourself



Build **weekly action plans** to help you achieve your goal

Your vision for your future

As you begin your journey to creating new healthy habits, it's a good idea to reflect on what you want to feel like, be like, and be able to do.

My Notes:

It can help to reflect on your own values and priorities.

Values: What really matters, to you?

Priorities: Answer the 4 questions below to develop your vision

What do you see yourself doing in the future?

Examples:

- I will do all the things I need to do each day
- I will be able to play with my grandchildren
- I will be able to play sports
- I will volunteer
- I will travel
- I will have enough independence to live in my own home.

Your answer:

How will you be feeling in the future?

Examples:

- I will feel good
- I will feel healthy
- I will have more energy
- I will be happy
- I will feel closer to family and friends

Your answer:

My Notes:

Who are the people you are surrounded by in the future?

Examples:

- Family
- Friends
- Colleagues

Your answer:

My Notes:

Are you healthier in the future? And how do you know?

Examples:

- I am healthier because my blood sugar and blood pressure are lower
- I am healthier because I feel happy and motivated
- I am healthier because I can golf again
- I am healthier because I have enough energy to take care of my grandkids
- I am healthier because I have enough independence to do what matters to me

Your answer:

Your goals

What changes do you need to make to achieve your vision? These are goals that will help you move towards your vision.

When you are trying to decide what goals you want to set, you want to pick goals that you:



Believe are **important** (supports your vision)



Feel confident that **you can do**



Feel **ready to work on**

Set 1 to 3 goals that will help you achieve your vision.

Example: A vision to have more energy and travel with friends can be achieved by setting goals to works on healthy habits, such as to:

- Get more exercise on a regular basis
- Have a restful sleep, most of the time
- Have a heart-healthy diet

Your Goal 1:

Your Goal 2:

Your Goal 3:






My Notes:

Step 2: What can you do this week to reach this goal?

A good action plan will be "S.M.A.R.T." That means your action plan is:

- 
Specific
- 
Measurable
- 
Achievable
- 
Relevant
- 
Time-bound

In your action plan, answer the following questions:

- 
What am I going to do?
- 
When am I going to do it?
- 
Where am I going to do it?
- 
How much am I going to do it?
- 
How often am I going to do it?

Action plan example for goal 1: get more exercise on a regular

Your
Action
Plan

This week I will:

Do resistance training exercises (What)

Tuesday and Friday at 7pm (When)

At home (Where)

1 set of exercises, 10-15 (How much)

2 times this week (How often)

My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:

1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10

Not very confident Very confident

My Notes:

Action plan example for goal 2: have a restful sleep, most of the

My Notes:

Your Action Plan

This week I will:
 Get up and go to bed on time _____ (What)
 Get up by 8 am, go to bed by 11pm (When)
 At home _____ (Where)
 2 times a day _____ (How much)
 4 times per day for the next 7 days (How often)

My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:
 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10
 Not very confident Very confident

Action plan example for goal 3: have a heart healthy diet.

Your Action Plan

This week I will:
 Have an apple _____ (What)
 After lunch _____ (When)
 At home _____ (Where)
 1 apple _____ (How much)
 5 times over the next 7 days _____ (How often)

My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:
 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10
 Not very confident Very confident

If you rated your confidence lower than a 7 on your action plan, try changing your plan so that you are setting yourself up for success.

Write your action plan for this week

Your Action Plan

This week I will:
 _____ (What)
 _____ (When)
 _____ (Where)
 _____ (How much)
 _____ (How often)

My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 Not very confident Very confident

If you did not accomplish your action plan: 6 steps to solving your problem

My Notes:

1. First, describe the problem. What stopped you? Was your goal too ambitious? Too complicated? Too easy?

2. Think about other ways to solve your problem. Do you need to change your goal? Make it smaller? More focused? Simpler?

3. Pick one idea:

4. Build your next action plan:

Your
Action
Plan

This week I will:

_____	(What)
_____	(When)
_____	(Where)
4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(How much)
_____	(How often)

My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not very confident					Very confident				

You can also use [Cardiac College’s THRIVE program reflection tool](#) to reflect on your action and work through problems that may have come up.

Planning and tips for slips and relapse

It would be great if we could make healthy lifestyle changes in one easy step. But, working on these changes can sometimes be hard. It’s a process.

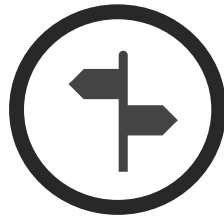
Slips and relapses are a normal part of the change process.

At some point, most people making a lifestyle change have a relapse, where they slip back into old habits. This can happen with exercise, nutrition, smoking cessation, or stress management.

Relapses often happen when you:



Travel or go on holiday



Go through life stress (e.g., a death in the family, changing jobs)



Get sick

So, it is important to be prepared for a slip (i.e., once or twice) or a relapse (i.e., more sustained) by:



Thinking about the reasons you wanted to reach this goal is key to your success



Reminding yourself why you wanted to reach this goal each time you feel you can’t do it or something gets in the way

Getting back on track after a relapse

1. Why is it important that you make a change and set a goal this week?

My Notes:

2. How important is this goal right now?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

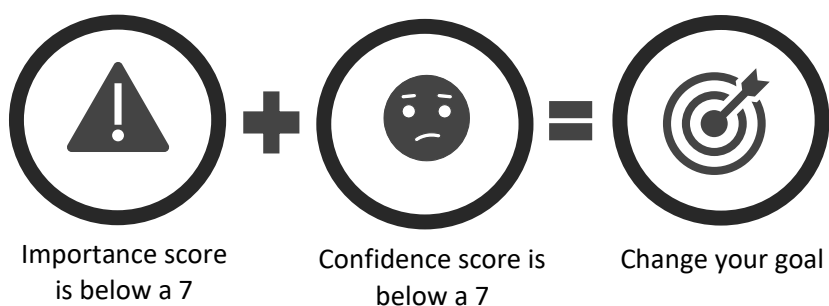
Not very important Unsure Very important

3. How confident are you to achieve this goal?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not very confident Unsure Very confident

If the goal you are trying to set is **not important to you** (you scored below a 7) and you **do not feel you have the confidence to do it** (you scored below a 7), then it may **not be the right goal** for you.



Choose something else or change the goal so that you feel it is something you can do. For example, if you wanted to set a goal to walk 5 days per week but you are not confident you can do that, then try 3 days per week instead.

If you believe it is **important (you scored 7 or higher)** and you feel **you can do it (you scored 7 or higher)**, then you are likely ready to **get back to working on this goal and do well!**



Thinking about the reasons you wanted to reach this goal is key to your success. **Each time you feel you can't do it or something gets in the way, think about why you wanted to reach this goal.**

My Notes:

Common inner reactions after a slip or relapse

When working on healthy lifestyle and habit changes, there are three common inner reactions people may have after they slip or relapse. The first two are traps and the third is helpful.

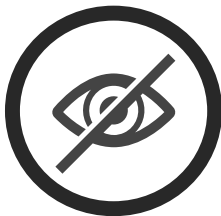
Trap 1: Emotional Self Abuse



For example, “I failed”, “I’m weak”, “I’m bad”, “I’m stupid” ...etc.

Problem: This kind of harsh, over-generalizing self-talk may seem like you’re just being honest with yourself. But, it damages your self-respect, reduces confidence in your own ability to change, and reduces your motivation...leading to more slips or relapse! This “honesty” is actually a trap.

Trap 2: Denial



For example, “What slip?”, “I haven’t really relapsed!” or, “Once won’t hurt! (or twice)” ...etc.

Problem: If you don’t admit to yourself that a slip is risky, or that you have actually relapsed, then you can’t fix it...another trap! (“emotional self-abuse” is on the other side of the same coin).

Helpful 3: Reality-based Approach



For example, “Yes, I did slip. But that makes me a human, not a failure!” “But I can get back on the wagon, I’ve done it before” ... “Why did I slip when I did...why not earlier or later...was there a trigger or stressor? How can I problem-solve for the future”.

Solution: You admit the problem, but avoid overgeneralizing (e.g., “failure”), and remind yourself of your previous accomplishments with habit change. This approach also involves reflecting on why you slipped and how you can problem solve for the future. It faces a problem, but protects your self-respect, your confidence in your ability to change, and your motivation.

My Notes:

Have you had a slip or relapse in one or more healthy lifestyle habit?

Write down any the most important information below:

1. Any “emotional self-abuse” thinking you might have. It can be helpful to recognize your own reactions to slips or relapses.

2. Any “denial” self-talk you might have.

3. How can you break out of these traps, to become more reality-based?

My Notes:

Resource to help you learn more about goal setting and action plans

Part of the self-management skill set is learning how to make successful change. Suggested resources for this topic on Cardiac College are:

- Read [Take Control: ‘Setting Goals for a Healthy Heart’](#)
- Watch the [THRIVE video, ‘Create a Plan for Change’](#)

Next week’s topic: take your heart medicines

If you would like to read ahead, check out these resources on Cardiac College:

- Read [Take Control: ‘Taking Your Heart Medicines’](#)
- Watch the [THRIVE video, ‘Take Your Medicines’](#)



Take Your Heart Medicines

Adapted from University Health Network (UHN) Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation Program

Your heart medicines are important for your health. When you take your medicines as they have been prescribed by your doctor, they reduce your risk of having another heart event.

Our goal

To provide you with the information that you need, to know:

1. Some common classes of heart medicines
2. Resources that can help you manage your medicines

Why is taking your medicine important?

Taking your heart medicines regularly as prescribed by your doctor will help:



Heart disease from getting worse

The chance of another heart event

Common Classes of Heart Medicines

There are many types of heart medicines. Each type works in its own way within your body. Talk to your doctor and pharmacist to find the right medicine(s) for you.

Brand names of heart medicines are listed to provide you with examples.

Anti-Platelets – Clopidogrel (Plavix), ASA (“baby aspirin”), Ticagrelor (Brilinta), Prasugrel (Effient)



What: Prevents your blood from being too “sticky” and forming a clot. It is used to lower the chance of heart attack or stroke

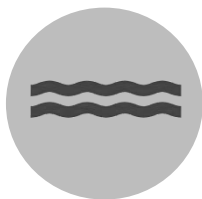
Why: Used to lower the chance of a blood clot or a blockage of a stent after it is placed in the heart

Common side Effects: Nosebleeds, easy bruising or bleeding (gums), small risk of major bleeding (stomach or brain)

My Notes:

Week 6

Anticoagulants - Warfarin (Coumadin), Apixaban (Eliquis), Rivaroxaban (Xarelto), Dabigatran (Pradax), Edoxaban (Lixiana)



What: Blood thinners are used to prevent blood clots from forming

Why: This can help to prevent strokes in patients who have arrhythmias, like atrial fibrillation

Common side effects: Easy bruising, upset stomach, vertigo, ringing in ears, light-headedness, abdominal pain, bleeding ulcers (black tarry stool), Impaired kidney or liver function, shortness of breath with Ticagrelor (Brilinta)

Betablockers – Metoprolol, Bisoprolol, Carvedilol, Atenolol, Propranolol



What: Medications ending in 'lol' that decrease the workload of the heart and improves its ability to pump

Why: To treat irregular heartbeats, like atrial fibrillation

Common side effects: Slow heart rate, low blood pressure. dizziness, headaches, worsening of asthma symptoms, masks signs of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), depression, sleep disturbance (nightmares), sexual dysfunction (impotence), lack of energy, fatigue

ACE inhibitors – Perindopril, Enalapril, Trandolapril, Ramipril, Lisinopril



What: Medications ending in 'pril' that help lower blood pressure and prevent future heart attacks. This medication also helps the heart pump blood around the body

Why: To protect your heart from future heart events and improve heart function after a heart attack

Common Side effects: Dry cough (very common), fast swelling of the lips or face, low blood pressure, dizziness, upset stomach, headache

My Notes:

Calcium Channel Blockers – Amlodipine, Diltiazem (Cardizem), Nifedipine



What: Medications that open up blood vessels to improve blood flow to the heart

Why: To treat angina and cardiac chest pain. It also prevents sudden tightening of the arteries that can reduce blood flow (vasospasm of the arteries)

Common side effects: Facial flushing (your face turns red for a short amount of time, edema (ankle swelling), headache, nausea, dizziness

Diuretics – Furosemide (Lasix), Hydrochlorothiazide (HCTZ), Indapamide, Chlorthalidone, MRA (“one”, Spironolactone, Eplerenone)



What: Medications that help your body get rid of extra fluid, which means your heart has less work to do to pump blood around your body

Why: To manage high blood pressure and heart failure

Common side effects: Low blood pressure, electrolyte imbalance (low potassium, low magnesium, low sodium)

Do you have questions about your medications?

MedsCheck is a free, 20 to 30-minute private consultation with a pharmacist where patients can review their medicines.



Free review of your medicines



One review per year



Ask your pharmacist for details

All Ontario residents who have a valid health card and are taking at least 3 prescription medicines can have one MedsCheck per year. If you are taking diabetes medicines, you can have a MedsCheck twice per year.

Ask your pharmacist for details.

My Notes:

Keep a routine



Take your medicines as prescribed



Avoid stopping medications without speaking to your doctor first



Have a routine. Try to take your medications at the same time every day and use a pill organizer to stay on track



Talk to your pharmacist or doctor about ways to manage your medicines

How to keep your routine when you are traveling



Plan ahead. Be sure to bring enough to cover the number of days you will be away plus a few days extra in case you get delayed



Pack your medicines in your carry-on bag – sometimes check bags get lost or delayed



Bring a list of your medicines. Tell your provider what you are actually taking if you are not taking them as written on the label. Taking pictures of your medicine bottles with your phone is a great way to keep your “list” on you

Let’s build a SMART goal for this week

When choosing a goal make sure it is:



Specific. Write down the details of your goal



Measurable. How will you know you reached your goal?



Achievable. Can you do what it takes to reach your goal? Is it too hard?



Relevant. Make sure the goal is something you want to do



Timely. When do you plan on reaching this goal? Have you given yourself enough time?

My Notes:

Example: I would like to add one serving of vegetables at lunch and dinner every day.

My Notes:

Write down a specific SMART Goal you would like to work on for this week:

Your Action Plan	This week I will:									
	_____	(What)								
	_____	(When)								
	_____	(Where)								
	_____	(How much)								
	_____	(How often)								
	My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not very confident						Very confident				

Remember:

If your rating is 7 or higher, great! You believe you can do this!

If your rating is less than 7, then you may want to:

- Learn more about the area you want to work on or prepare yourself to work on that area
- Take smaller steps towards your goals. For example, you may adjust the different parts of your action plan such as "how much" or "how often"

Resources to help you learn more about the heart, comment tests, and treatments

Part of the self-management skill set is learning how to select reliable sources of health information. Suggested resources for this topic on Cardiac College are:

- Read [Treat Heart Disease: 'Taking your Heart Medicines'](#)
- Watch the THRiVE video, ['Take Your Medicines'](#)

Speak with your nurse, doctor, or pharmacist if you are unsure or have questions about your medications.

Next week's topic: heart healthy ways of eating

If you would like to read ahead, check out these resources on Cardiac College:

- [Eat Healthy: 'Eating Well for a Healthy Heart'](#)
- [The THRiVE video, 'Eat the Mediterranean Way'](#)



Heart Healthy Ways of Eating

Adapted from University Health Network (UHN) Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation Program

Eating heart healthy foods can help reduce your risk of future heart events. But, sometimes it can be challenging to know which ways of eating are heart healthy.

Our goal

To provide you with the information that you need to:

- 1. Know how to eat the Mediterranean way

Why is this information important?

Heart healthy ways of eating can:



Help control your blood pressure, blood cholesterol levels and blood sugars



Lower your chance of developing health problems including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and some cancers



Lower your chance of having another heart event or dying from heart causes

Eating the Mediterranean way

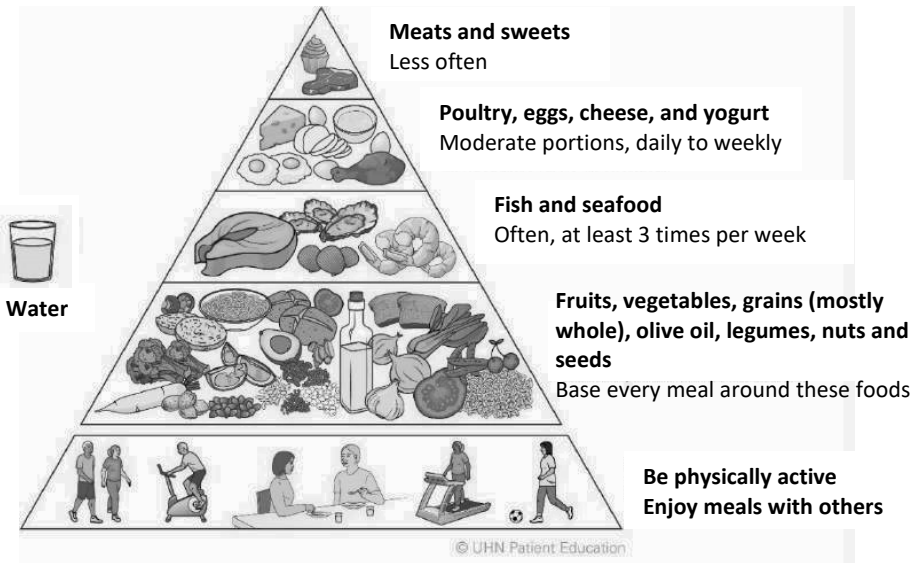
A great way to build heart healthy eating habits is by using the traditional foods and cooking methods of people who live around the Mediterranean Sea. This way living includes eating healthy foods, enjoying meals with others, and living an active lifestyle.

There is no right way to do this. You can choose foods that you like, using the pyramid as your guide (shown on the next page).

Try choosing foods and activities that are at the bottom of the pyramid every day and those that are closer to the top less often.



My Notes:

Week 7



My Notes:

Eating the Mediterranean way includes:

-  Lots of foods from plants (fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes)
-  Eating fish and seafood at least 3 times a week
-  Choosing healthy fats such as olive oil, nuts, and seeds regularly
-  Having dairy, poultry, and eggs in moderation
-  Having very little red meat (beef, pork, lamb) and sweets

Mediterranean diet score tool

This tool can help you understand how close your current eating habits are to the Mediterranean way of eating. The tool has 13 “yes or no” questions. You will be able to identify areas you can work on and will receive tips on smalls changes you can make to eat the Mediterranean way.

This tool is also available on the [Cardiac College website](#), where you can save and print your answers.

A SMART goal I would like to work on

When choosing a goal make sure it is:



Specific. Write down the details of your goal



Measurable. How will you know you reached your goal?



Achievable. Can you do what it takes to reach your goal? Is it too hard?



Relevant. Make sure the goal is something you want to do



Timely. When do you plan on reaching this goal? Have you given yourself enough time?

Example: I would like to add one serving of vegetables at lunch and dinner every day.

Write down a specific SMART Goal you would like to work on for this week:

Your
Action
Plan

This week I will:

_____ (What)

_____ (When)

_____ (Where)

_____ (How much)

_____ (How often)

My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not very confident							Very confident		

Remember:

If your rating is 7 or higher, great! You believe you can do this!

If your rating is less than 7, then you may want to:

- Learn more about the area you want to work on or prepare yourself to work on that area
- Take smaller steps towards your goals. For example, you may adjust the different parts of your action plan such as “how much” or “how often”

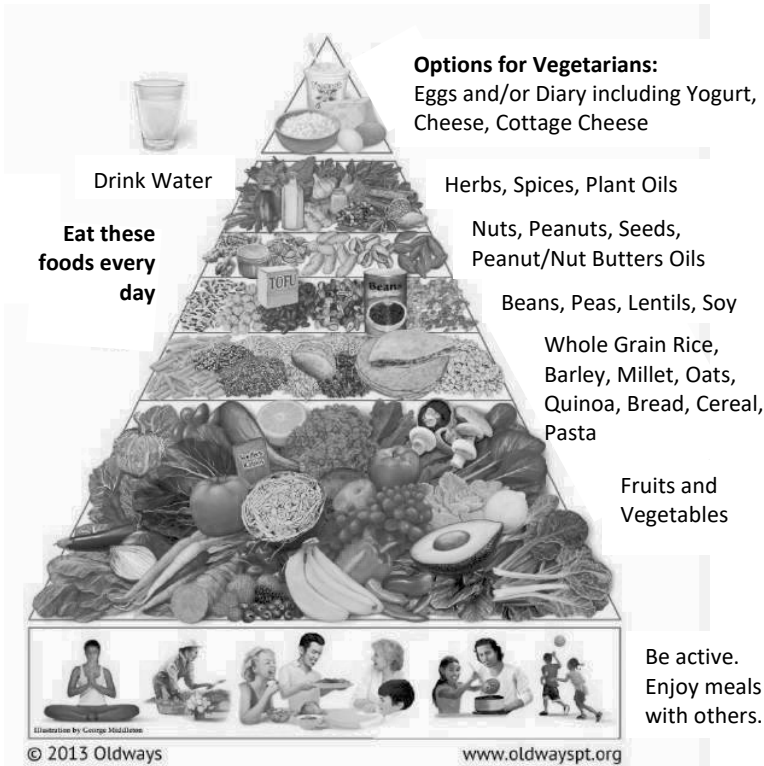
My Notes:

Other heart healthy eating patterns

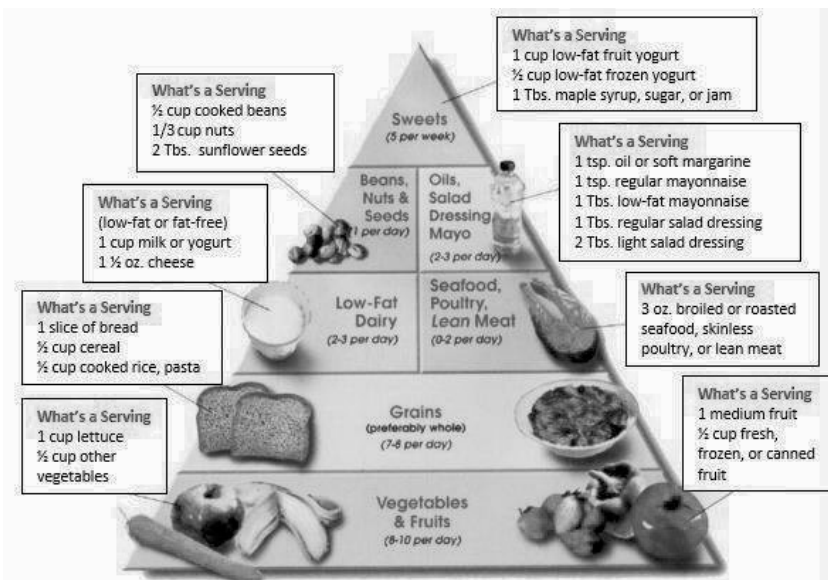
Outside of the Mediterranean way, there are a number of other heart healthy eating patterns, like the vegetarian or DASH diets. They all have many similarities and benefits. The best diet pattern for you, is the one you can see yourself sticking to over the long term.

My Notes:

Vegetarian and vegan diet pyramid



DASH diet pyramid



What do these eating patterns have in common?

- 1. Eating **whole foods that come from plants** and are less processed. Try choosing more:



Vegetables and fruits



Nuts and seeds



Whole grains (e.g., brown rice, whole grain bread, steel cut oats, barley, buckwheat, wild rice)



Legumes (e.g., beans, chickpeas, lentils etc.)

- 2. **Eating at home with friends and family.** Try having meals with others to:



Enjoy quality time together



Share traditions around food (e.g., passing traditions on to younger generations, and learning about other cultures)



Try new healthy foods that you might not normally eat



Model healthy ways of eating to children and family members

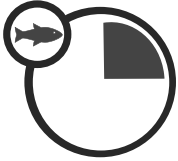
What can you do to make a meal more heart healthy?

- 1. Consider the plate model for serving sizes, where:



Half (1/2) of your plate is filled with vegetables

My Notes:



One quarter (1/4) of your plate is filled with protein



One quarter (1/4) of your plate is filled with grains and starches

2. Choose **whole grains or higher fibre starches**, like brown rice, barley or sweet potatoes, **more often** than white potatoes or white rice
3. Choose **lean animal proteins**, like chicken and fish, or **plant proteins**, like legumes or tofu, more
4. **Add vegetables to each meal**
5. **Limit salty, higher saturated fat gravies**
6. **Enjoy the meal with friends or family at home**

Resources to help you make a plan

Part of the self-management skill set is learning how to select reliable sources of health information. Suggested resources for this topic on Cardiac College are:

- Fill out the [Mediterranean Diet Score Tool](#)
- Make an action plan based on your results
- Read [‘Eating Well for a Healthy Heart’](#)

Next week’s topic: take care of your emotional wellbeing - part 1

If you would like to read ahead, check out these resources on Cardiac College:

- [Feel Well: ‘Managing Stress for a Healthy Heart’](#)
- [The THRiVE video, ‘Manage Stress, Depression and Burnout’](#)

My Notes:



Your Emotional Wellbeing: Part 1

Adapted from University Health Network (UHN) Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation Program

Week 8

After your heart event, it is important that you focus on your mental health, which is just as important as your physical well-being. For example, it is common for heart patients to feel stressed, have anger, have anxiety, or be depressed.

Our goal

To provide you with the tips and tools that you need to know:

1. How stress affects your health
2. How to help manage stress
3. Basic points about 3 kinds of mental health conditions which may affect heart patients

We will also discuss how to make a plan to manage your stress better.

Your emotional wellbeing

Living through a cardiac event or any serious health issue impacts you and your loved ones. Cardiac rehab is a time to mend your physical and emotional health.

Some stress is healthy, and a person can usually cope with it. But when a person experiences a 'big' stress (like a heart event) or chronic stress (that happens over and over again) it can be more difficult to cope with.

We hope that by sharing your personal journey and learning from each other about how you cope with stress that you can learn some new strategies to try out.

Why is this information important?

Stress is an unavoidable fact of life for all of us. In the right measure, it can be challenging and motivating. **The problem is too much stress, especially if it is intense or prolonged.**

If you experience too much stress it can:










Disrupt your sleep








Lower your mood

My Notes:



Body

-  Increased heart-rate, palpitations, blood pressure
-  Light-headedness
-  Shortness of breath
-  Muscle tension (headaches, backaches, etc.)
-  Weight loss/gain
-  Low energy
-  Constipation, diarrhoea

Behaviour

-  Restlessness, agitation
-  Loss of initiative, motivation
-  Social withdrawal
-  Aggression
-  Sleep disturbance: not sleeping (insomnia) or too much sleep

Tips for Dealing with Stress

-  Self-compassion – be kind, understanding, and encouraging toward yourself
-  Mindfulness – be present, focus on what you are feeling in the moment. Learn how to take “1 step back” from your thoughts and feelings

My Notes:



Social support – turn to friends, family members, co-workers, or professionals to help you cope with setbacks, solve problems, etc.



Sense of humor – shift your focus away from your current situation and look at things in a different way



Exercise – exercising regularly can improve your mood, sleep quality, resilience and your confidence



Slow down your breathing – practice deep breathing to help your brain calm down and relax

My Notes:

A simple tip for dealing with stress

1. Sit or lie flat in a comfortable position
2. Put one hand on your belly and your other hand on your chest
3. Breathe deeply through your nose
4. Breathe out through pursed lips
5. Repeat 5 times
6. Notice how you feel at the end of the exercise

Let's make an action plan

What is one new thing you could try to help you manage your stress? Start with small changes. Think of something you can do every day.

Be as specific as possible. Pick something that you feel you can do. You should rate your confidence to do it at a 7 or higher on the scale. If your number is less than 7, make some changes to your action plan so that you are better able to do it.

Let's work through an example. Say you decide to try the breathing exercise we just did. You could write:

Your Action Plan

This week I will:

Breathing exercises _____ (What)

Before bed _____ (When)

In bed _____ (Where)

5-minutes _____ (How much)

Each night _____ (How often)

My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not very confident							Very confident		

Now, let's work your action plan for this week:

Your Action Plan	This week I will:								
		(What)							
		(When)							
		(Where)							
		(How much)							
		(How often)							
	My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not very confident				Very confident					

My Notes:

Other ways of building stress management skills

This has been a basic introduction to stress, its effects, and how to manage it.

You may benefit from a program to learn stress management skills.

Everyone has stress but...

Stress is not the same thing as specific mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety disorders, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Below are common symptoms of these conditions:

Depression

More of the time than not, for 2 weeks or more, you have:



Low mood



Loss of interest / pleasure

Anxiety disorders

Repeated or constant:



Tension



Worry



Fear



Agitation



Avoidance



Panic

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

When you experienced or witnessed an actual or perceived life-threatening event yourself or of someone else (such as cardiac arrest), you may:



Have flashbacks, bad dreams, feeling tense, jumpy, fearful, hypervigilant, avoiding “reminders”



Feel emotionally numb or “flat”

These symptoms may be immediate or delayed.

For these it is important to seek professional attention such as your family doctor or a mental health professional such as a psychologist, psychiatrist or social worker.

Resources to help you manage stress

Part of the self-management skill set is learning how to manage stress. Suggested resources for this topic on Cardiac College are:

- Read [Managing Stress for a Healthy Heart](#)
- Read [Enjoying a Healthy Relationship and Sexual Intimacy](#)
- Watch the [THRiVE video Sleep Well](#)
- Watch the [THRiVE video Strengthen Your Social Relationships](#)
- Watch the [THRiVE video Manage Depression, Stress, and Burnout](#)

Speak with your rehabilitation trainer or nurse for a referral to our psychologist, or social worker.

Next week’s topic: live resistance training

- Please have your TheraBand ready

My Notes:



Live Resistance Training

Adapted from University Health Network (UHN) Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation Program

Resistance training is a type of exercise that increases the strength and endurance of your muscles. This type of exercise can help reduce how much muscle you lose as you age, make your bones and joints stronger, and make everyday activities (e.g., getting up from a chair, carrying groceries, etc.) easier.

My Notes:

Week 9



Frequency

- 2 to 3 days per week with 24 – 48 hours between working a specific muscles group (e.g., weight train Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday) to help your muscles recover



Intensity

- A rating of perceived exertion (RPE) of 11 to 14
- Increase load by 5% once 12 to 15 repetitions can be lifted comfortably



Time

- 1 to 3 sets of 10 to 15 repetitions (“reps”) that are slow and controlled (try to take 3 seconds to lift, and 3 seconds to lower)



Type

- Choose 6 to 8 exercises that use your major muscle groups:
 - Chest
 - Back
 - Shoulders
 - Arms
 - Abdominals (muscles between your ribs and pelvis)
 - Legs

Safety Tips



Warm up for at least 5 minutes before starting your routine



Do not hold your breath; it can increase your blood pressure during exercise



Do not lift a weight that is so heavy that you have to strain yourself



Follow your exercise prescription that has set out for you by our team



Do your resistance training on non-consecutive days. For example, Monday-Wednesday-Friday or Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday



Soreness and stiffness are normal when you start a new program, pain is not



Stretch after your routine to cool down and avoid muscle soreness



Do not exercise, if you are injured or sick. Talk to your doctor or see a physiotherapist for assessment

My Notes:

Let's build a SMART goal for this week

When choosing a goal make sure it is:



Specific. Write down the details of your goal



Measurable. How will you know you reached your goal?



Achievable. Can you do what it takes to reach your goal? Is it too hard?



Relevant. Make sure the goal is something you want to do



Timely. When do you plan on reaching this goal? Have you given yourself enough time?

Example: I would like to add one serving of vegetables at lunch and dinner every day.

Write down a specific SMART goal you would like to work on for this week:

Your Action Plan

This week I will:

_____ (What)

_____ (When)

_____ (Where)

_____ (How much)

_____ (How often)

My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not very confident Very confident

My Notes:

Remember:

If your rating is 7 or higher, great! You believe you can do this!

If your rating is less than 7, then you may want to:

- Learn more about the area you want to work on or prepare yourself to work on that area
- Take smaller steps towards your goals. For example, you may adjust the different parts of your action plan such as “how much” or “how often”

Resources to help you exercise safely

Suggested resources for this topic on Cardiac College are:

- Sample Resistance Training Routines (See next page)
- [St. Joseph’s Cardiac Rehab Exercise Video](#)
- [Staying Active for a Healthy Heart](#)

Speak with your rehabilitation trainer if you are unsure how to use this information to help you exercise safely.

Next week’s topic: how to choose healthy foods

If you would like to read ahead, check out these resources on Cardiac College:

- [Eat Healthy: ‘Eating Well for a Healthy Heart’](#).
- Watch the [THRiVE video, ‘Choose Healthy Foods’](#)
- Watch the [THRiVE video series ‘Making Healthy Food Choices’](#)

Begin with 6-8 exercises. As you feel comfortable, add 1-2 exercises a week (up to 12 exercises).

Hips & Thighs



1
Start: Sit at the front of the chair, chest up, and feet hip width apart. Slowly lift out of the chair with your knees directly over your toes. Keep your back straight and arms out.
Finish: Hold the top position with knees bent. Slowly bend knees to lower yourself to the chair. Don't drop to the chair.

Chest



2
Start: Place the band around your upper back. Grab the ends of the band with elbows bent and palms facing down or inward.
Finish: Press out, extending your elbows forward to shoulder level. Slowly return to starting position.

Upper Back



3
Start: Grasp the band with both hands in front of your chest with the elbows slightly bent and shoulders down.
Finish: Keep elbows slightly bent and pull band outward until the band reaches across your middle chest. Hold the end position briefly, squeezing the shoulder blades together. Slowly return to starting position.

Middle Back



4
Start: Wrap the middle of the band around an extended foot. Grasp both ends of the band at the outside of your knee with your outside hand.
Finish: Pull band backwards and slightly up until your outside hand is beside your ribcage. Pause. Slowly lower to starting position.

Shoulders



5
Start: One foot and hand anchor one end of the band. The other hand is beside the shoulder grasping the band, hand level with the chin, and arm straight up from the floor.
Finish: Extend the arm overhead until directly over the shoulder. Try not to lean to one side. Pause. Slowly lower to starting position.

Shoulders



6
Start: Anchor as per #5 with slightly shorter band. Grasp the band at position just outside the knee. Can have palm down or palm forward (easier on the shoulders).
Finish: Lift arm to side with elbow slightly bent. Lift to shoulder height or slightly below shoulder height if you have shoulder problems. Pause. Slowly lower to starting position.

Upper Arm - Front



7
Start: Keep same anchor position as #6, except slightly shorter band length. Grasp band with palm facing up.
Finish: Curl hand to shoulder keeping your elbow at your side at the lower ribs. Pause. Slowly lower to starting position.

Upper Arm - Back



8
Start: Seated at the front edge of the chair and chest up. Place the band around your knee, anchoring the band with one hand on the opposite thigh and holding the other end of the band down at your side with your elbow bent.
Finish: Extend your elbow until your arm is straight down by your side. Pause. Slowly return to starting position.

Legs - Front



9
Start: Tie the band in a knot and wrap around your feet, or tie the band around one leg of the chair with your foot through the loop.
Finish: Extend one leg out, keeping your knee in the same position. Keep your posture. Pause. Slowly return to starting position.

Legs - Back



10
Start: Stand behind the chair holding the back for support. Wrap the tied band around your ankles, or tie the band around a leg of the chair with your foot through the loop.
Finish: Curl one ankle up. Keep the knee in the same position and your back stable. Pause. Slowly return to starting position.

Lower Back



11
Start: Stand behind the chair holding the back for support, with knees slightly bent, and leaning forward with back straight. You can wrap a band around your ankles, or do the exercise without a band.
Finish: Extend one leg out so that it is in line with your body. Don't over-extend the leg or arch in the low back. Pause. Slowly return to starting position.

Abdominals



12
Start: Seated comfortably in the chair, chest up, and both knees bent with the feet on the ground in front of you.
Finish: Lift one knee so that it is higher than the opposite knee, or slightly rock back with both feet on the ground. Tighten your abdominals. Keep your chest up. Pause. Slowly return to starting position.

Perform 2-3 sets of 8-12 repetitions for 6-12 exercises, 2-3 days per week.

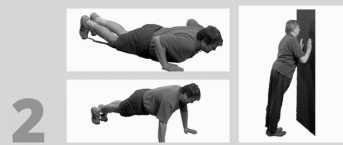
Hips & Thighs Modification



1
Start: Stand with weight at your sides, chest up, feet hip-width apart, and knees bent. Slowly lower yourself with knees over your toes. Keep your back straight and chest up.

Finish: Hold the bottom position with knees bent. Don't drop down into a squat. Slowly raise yourself back up. Breathe.

Chest Modification



2
Start: Lie on the ground (or stand slightly away from a wall) with hands just below your armpits. Tighten your abdominals and hips to keep your body straight. Press up from your toes or knees (or away from the wall) keeping elbows at your sides.

Finish: Press out, extending your elbows. Pause at the top. Breathe. Slowly return to starting position.

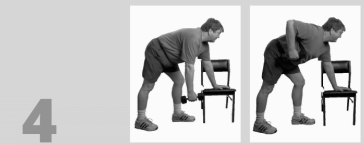
Upper Back



3
Start: Stagger feet for balance. Keep back flat to maintain neutral spine. Place a hand on the seat of the chair for support.

Finish: Weight is lifted up to the side even with the shoulder, so the palm is facing down. Slowly return to starting position.

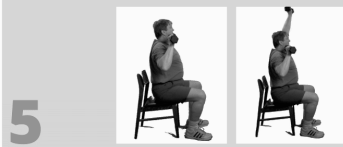
Middle Back



4
Start: Stagger feet for balance. Keep back flat to maintain neutral spine. Place a hand on the seat of the chair for support.

Finish: Pull weight upwards until your outside hand is beside your ribcage. Pause. Slowly lower to starting position. Alternate sides.

Shoulders



5
Start: Sit at the edge of the chair. Tighten abdominals and keep chest up. Weight is held at shoulder level with palms forward or facing your ears.

Finish: Extend one arm overhead until directly over the shoulder. Try not to lean to one side. Pause. Slowly lower to starting position. Alternate arms.

Shoulders Modification



6
Start: Stand in a balanced, comfortable position with arms down to the side. Shoulders back and relaxed, chest up, and knees slightly bent.

Finish: Lift arms to side, trying to not shrug shoulders. Lift to shoulder height with palms down or facing forward (modification). Pause. Slowly lower to starting position.

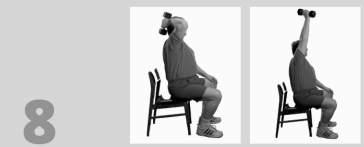
Upper Arm - Front



7
Start: Stand with weight to the side. Relax shoulders. Palms facing forwards.

Finish: Curl hand to shoulder, keeping your elbow at your side at the lower ribs. Pause. Slowly lower to starting position.

Upper Arm - Back



8
Start: Seated at the front edge of the chair, chest up. Place one hand holding weight behind your head with your elbow up beside your ear.

Finish: Extend only from the elbow until your arm is straight over your head. Pause. Lower weight to starting position. Alternate sides.

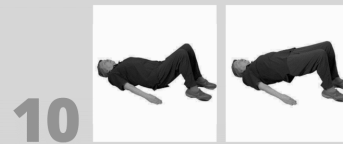
Legs - Front



9
Start: Stand with legs staggered. Hold weight in outside hand. Hold the back of the chair with your free hand.

Finish: Bend down so your back knee moves towards the floor. Only go down as far as you feel comfortable. Keep chest up.

Legs - Back



10
Start: Lie on the floor with your knees at 90°. You can also do this with your feet up on a chair.

Finish: Push heels into the floor while lifting your bottom off the floor. Tighten abdominals and buttocks without over-arching your back. Return to starting position.

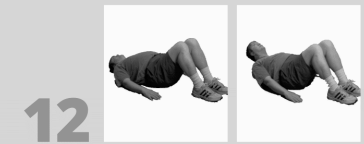
Lower Back



11
Start: Start on all fours. Tighten abdominals and maintain neutral spine (natural back curve).

Finish: Extend leg straight back, without arching in the back, while contracting your abdominals. Pause. Return to starting position. Alternate legs.

Abdominals



12
Start: Lie on your back with both knees bent. Hands down by your side.

Finish: Tighten abdominals as you curl upward. Slide hands towards your heels, moving them about one-hand distance. Slowly return to starting position.



How to Choose Heart Healthy Foods

Adapted from University Health Network (UHN) Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation Program

Eating heart healthy foods can help reduce your risk of future heart events. But, sometimes it can be challenging to know which foods are heart healthy.

Our goal

To provide you with the information that you need to:

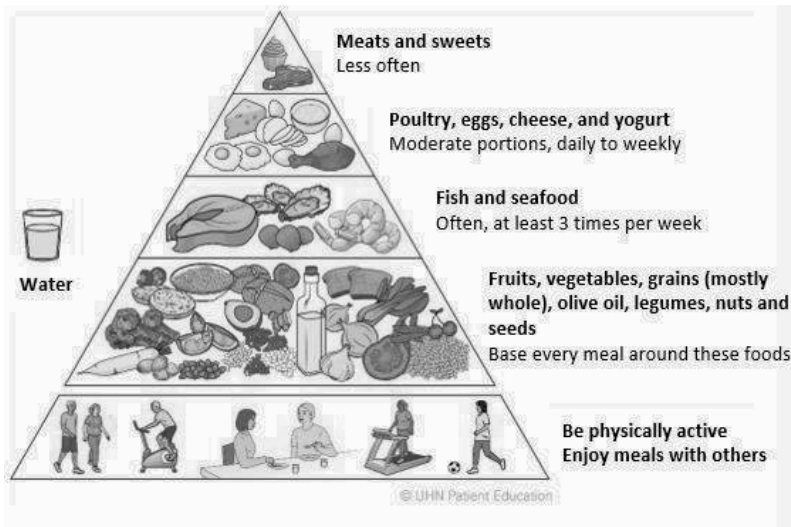
1. Know which foods are heart healthy

Heart healthy eating patterns

Remember, there are a variety of heart healthy eating patterns. They all have many similarities and benefits. The best diet pattern for you, is the one you can see yourself following long term.

Here is a brief overview of the 3 patterns of eating that you were introduced to in the 'Heart Healthy Ways of Eating' section.

1. Mediterranean Diet



Eating the Mediterranean way focuses on:



Cooking food at home



Sharing meals with others

My Notes:

Week 10



Seasoning foods with garlic, onion and tomatoes



Cooking with extra virgin olive oil as the main oil



Shopping the perimeter (outer edges) of the grocery store to choose less processed foods



Eating mostly plant foods such as whole grains, vegetables and fruits, legumes, nuts and seeds



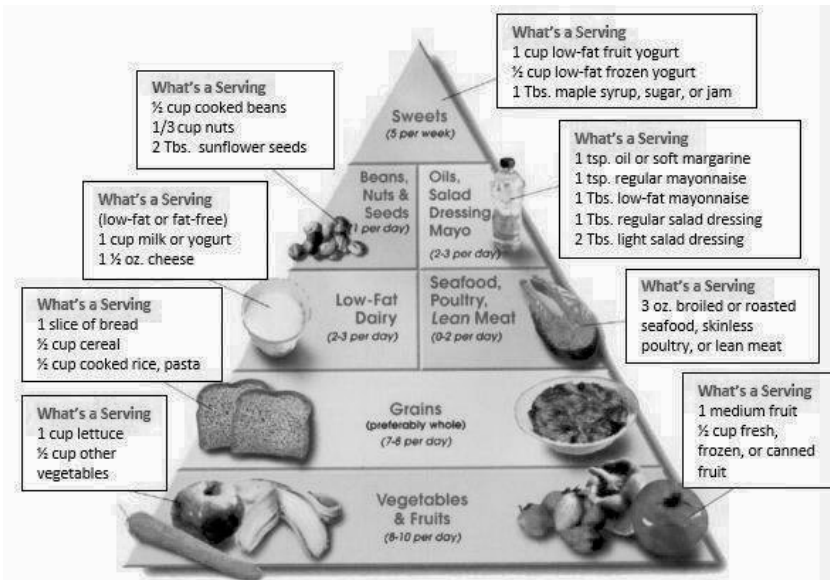
Choosing fish and seafood often



Eating less high fat dairy, poultry, and red meat

My Notes:

2. The DASH Diet



The DASH diet focuses on:



Eating mostly plant foods such as whole grains, vegetables and fruits, legumes, nuts & seeds



Eating less high fat dairy, poultry, and red meat



Eating sweets less often



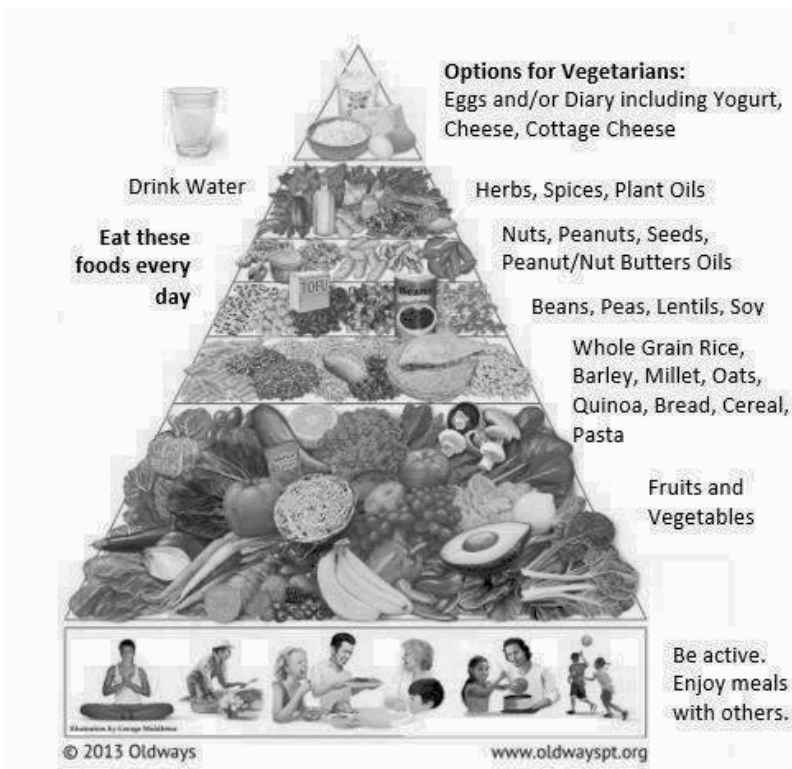
Choosing fish, seafood, poultry, and lean cuts of meat often



Cooking with extra virgin olive oil as the main oil

These foods are rich in heart healthy nutrients like calcium, magnesium, and potassium, which have been shown to help lower blood pressure.

3. The vegetarian and vegan diet



It is similar to the Mediterranean diet, but it:



Limits or avoids foods that come from animals



Focuses on plant sources of omega 3 heart healthy fats, like pumpkin seeds

My Notes:

Why Are Whole Foods Important?

Whole foods are unprocessed or minimally processed foods. They are:



High in fibre. Fibre helps us stay full longer, improves blood sugars, and may help lower cholesterol levels



Rich in healthy unsaturated fats. These fats are good for managing cholesterol levels



Naturally lower in sodium (salt) and rich in other nutrients that are good for lowering blood pressure



Contain no added sugar. Less sugar helps you keep your blood sugars and triglycerides in a good range, and maintain a healthy weight

Let's talk about some whole foods that are part of these heart healthy patterns and have an important role in improving heart health.

Oils



Use olive oil as your main cooking, baking, and salad fat. Olive oil is high in heart healthy unsaturated fats and antioxidants (help your body destroy material that harm your cells).

Aim for:

- 1 tablespoon (15 ml) per serving – about the size of an ice cube
- 3 to 4 servings each day

Nuts



My Notes:

Nuts are a source of healthy fats, fibre and antioxidants. You can also use 2 tablespoons of natural nut butter as a serving instead of whole nuts.

Aim for:

- ¼ cup (60 ml) per serving – about the size of a golf ball
- 1 serving each day

Fish



Include cold water fatty fish more often, such as salmon, trout, mackerel, or sardines. These fish are your best source of omega 3 heart healthy fats. Omega 3s are an essential fat for heart health. They also decrease inflammation throughout your body.

Canned fish that is packed in water or oil is also a great option.

If you are following a vegetarian or a vegan pattern of eating, consider getting your omega 3 fats from plant sources such as flax seed, chia seeds, canola oil, and walnuts.

Aim for:

- 3 to 4 ounces per serving – about the size of a deck of cards
- 3 servings each week

Plant Protein



Replacing some of your animal protein with plant protein helps lower your intake of unhealthy saturated fats and increase your intake of fibre.

My Notes:

Choose plant proteins such as cooked dried beans, lentils and chickpeas or tofu more often. When buying canned legumes or foods made from soy, choose low sodium options.

Aim for:

- ¾ cup (175 ml)
- 3 servings each week

Check out the resource section for some recipes on Cardiac College that use plant proteins in a meal.

Vegetables and Fruits

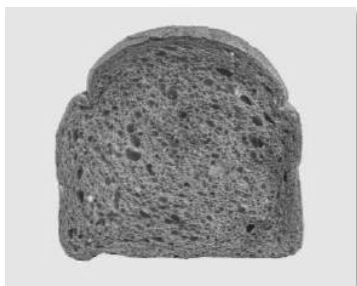


Include a variety of raw, cooked, fresh, or frozen fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables are high in vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fibre. Choose a variety of colours and fill one half your plate with these nutritious foods.

Aim for:

- 4+ vegetable servings each day – about the size of a baseball
- 3+ fruit servings each day – about the size of a baseball

Whole Grains and Starches



Choose whole grains instead of processed and refined grains. For example: 100% whole grain bread or cereal, brown rice, quinoa, barley. Whole grains are higher in fibre and nutrients than processed grains such as white flour.

Amounts vary. For example, 1 serving of potato is about the size of a computer mouse, whereas 1 serving of crackers is about the size of 4 casino chips.

My Notes:

Example:

In 1 cup of a cereal there is 6 g of fibre. Unless we know how much fibre we need for the day, it might be hard to know if there is a little or a lot of fibre in this product.

If we look at the % daily value we can see that it is 24%, this means that there is 24% of our whole daily recommended fibre intake in 1 cup of this cereal. Since this is higher than 15%, this would mean that there is a lot of fibre in this cereal.

It’s important to remember that everyone is different, and that the % daily values are set for the general population and are based on a 2000 calorie per day diet. So, your needs for some of these nutrients may be different than what is listed on the % daily value.

What nutrients do you want to try to get more of in your diet?

Nutrients that you would want to see a % daily value of 15% or higher would be:



Fibre



Vitamins



Minerals like calcium or iron

For nutrients that we want to limit such as **saturated fat and sodium**, choose products that have **5% or less of the daily value** for these nutrients.

Currently there is no % daily value for sugar, but new labels will eventually include one. For now, be aware that **sugar is something we want to limit in our diet**.

What about sodium?

- Patients on a low sodium diet should aim for a total of less than <2g of sodium per day
- Low sodium products are those with less than < 5% daily value
- A good way to shop is to avoid products with more than >10% sodium

My Notes:

Let's practice reading food labels: % daily value

Take a look at this nutrition facts table.

Nutrition Facts		
Per 1 cup (55 g)		
Amount	Cereal	With 1/2 cup skim milk
Calories	200	240
% Daily Value		
Fat 1 g*	2 %	2 %
Saturated 0.2 g + Trans 0 g	1 %	2 %
Cholesterol 0 mg	0 %	1 %
Sodium 200 mg	8 %	11 %
Carbohydrate 45 g	15 %	17 %
Fibre 6 g	24 %	24 %
Sugars 9 g		
Protein 6 g		
Vitamin A	0 %	8 %
Vitamin C	0 %	0 %
Calcium	2 %	15 %
Iron	50 %	50 %

1. Does this food have a low or high % daily value of **calcium**?

2. Does this food have a low or high % daily value of **iron**?

Q1 Answer: % daily value of Calcium is 2% – this is less than 5% DV so it is a low calcium food choice.

Q2 Answer: % daily value of iron is 50% - this is a high iron food choice. Since this product is a cereal, you may see a second column that shows the nutrition information if you added a ½ cup of skim milk. Since milk is a high calcium food, the % daily value for calcium goes up from 2% to 15%, so now it would be considered a high calcium food choice.

Let's practice reading food labels: compare the amount of sugar

The recommended amount of added sugar for:



Women is less than 6 tsp of sugar/day



Men it's less than 9 tsp of sugar/day

Added sugar includes things like:



Brown sugar



Honey



Molasses

My Notes:



Jams

Fruit juices

Some foods like yogurt, have naturally occurring sugar in them. This would not be included in the daily limit of 6-9 tsp/day of added sugar. Unfortunately, most food labels don't distinguish between naturally occurring sugar, such as lactose, and added sugars.

To help you determine if a food has a little or a lot of sugar, you can do some simple math:



4 grams of sugar



1 teaspoon (tsp) of sugar

To get the number of teaspoons of sugar per serving:



Number of grams on the nutrition facts table.



Take the grams of sugar listed on the nutrition facts table and divide by 4, you'll get the number of teaspoons of sugar per serving.

Let's practice by looking at these two yogurts.

Valeur nutritive Nutrition Facts	
pour 3/4 tasse (175g) Per 3/4 cup (175g)	
Teneur Amount	% valeur quotidienne % Daily Value
Calories / Calories 100	
Lipides / Fat 0g	0 %
saturés / Saturated 0g + trans / Trans 0g	0 %
Cholestérol / Cholesterol 0mg	
Sodium / Sodium 65mg	3 %
Glucides / Carbohydrates 6g	2 %
Fibres / Fibre 0g	0 %
Sucres / Sugars 6g	
Protéines / Protein 17g	
Vitamine A / Vitamin A	0 %
Vitamine C / Vitamin C	0 %
Calcium / Calcium	20 %
Fer / Iron	0 %

1.5 teaspoons of sugar

Valeur nutritive Nutrition Facts	
pour 3/4 tasse (175 g) Per 3/4 cup (175g)	
Teneur Amount	% valeur quotidienne % Daily Value
Calories / Calories 140	
Lipides / Fat 0g	0 %
saturés / Saturated 0g + trans / Trans 0g	0 %
Cholestérol / Cholesterol 0mg	
Sodium / Sodium 55mg	2 %
Glucides / Carbohydrates 20g	7 %
Fibres / Fibre 0g	0 %
Sucres / Sugars 19g	
Protéines / Protein 15g	
Vitamine A / Vitamin A	0 %
Vitamine C / Vitamin C	0 %
Calcium / Calcium	20 %
Fer / Iron	0 %

4.75 teaspoons of sugar

My Notes:

Lined area for taking notes.

On the left-hand side you can see that the unsweetened yogurt has 6 grams of sugar per ¼ cup serving. Divide 6 grams of sugar by 4, and we get 1.5 tsp of sugar. Since this yogurt is unsweetened, all of the sugar is likely naturally occurring sugar.

On the right-hand side we have a sweetened yogurt which contains 19 grams of sugar per ¼ cup serving. Divide 19 grams of sugar by 4, and we get 4.75 tsp of sugar. Most of this sugar is likely added sugar.

My Notes:

Nutrition claims

There are many nutrition claims that you may see on products. Here are some examples of some claims you may see:

- Fat free
- Low fat
- Light
- No added sugar
- Unsweetened
- Cholesterol free
- No cholesterol



They must meet specific guidelines set out by Health Canada to be added on a food label. These claims can be helpful in choosing a product, but it’s always important to look at the ingredients list and nutrition facts table, rather than relying on nutrition claims alone.

Extra light claims



Light can refer to colour/flavour - can have multiple meanings. In this case it is not referring to fat content of this oil.

Sodium and salt claims

**'25 % less salt'
may be misleading**




NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION		
Per 125 mL Serving	Amount	% Daily Value
Calories	10	10
Fat	0 g	0%
Saturated Fat	0 g	0%
125 mL	0 g	0%
Cholesterol	0 mg	—
Sodium	670 mg	28%
Potassium	300 mg	9%

The claim on this can of soup states that it has 25% less salt. But when we look at the nutrition facts table we can see that it actually contains more than 15% of the daily value for sodium, making this a high sodium food choice.

It's always important to read the nutrition facts table to find the actual amount of sodium in each serving.

You can also look for the “no salt added” nutrition claim which can be found on canned legumes, tomatoes, and certain sauces or broths. This means there was no salt used in making the product. Look out for this claim when you're trying to choose low sodium foods.

High fibre claims



Nutrition Facts		
Per 1 cup (55 g)		
Amount	Cereal	With 1/2 cup skim milk
Calories	200	240
% Daily Value		
Fat 1 g*	2 %	2 %
Saturated 0.2 g	1 %	2 %
+ Trans 0 g		
Cholesterol 0 mg	0 %	1 %
Sodium 200 mg	8 %	11 %
Carbohydrate 45 g	15 %	17 %
Fibre 6 g	24 %	24 %
Sugars 9 g		
Protein 6 g		
Vitamin A	0 %	8 %
Vitamin C	0 %	0 %
Calcium	2 %	15 %
Iron	50 %	50 %

Another helpful nutrition claim is the high fibre claim. This can be used if a product contains 5 grams of fibre or more per serving.

My Notes:

Let's build a SMART goal for this week

When choosing a goal make sure it is:



Specific. Write down the details of your goal



Measurable. How will you know you reached your goal?



Achievable. Can you do what it takes to reach your goal? Is it too hard?



Relevant. Make sure the goal is something you want to do



Timely. When do you plan on reaching this goal? Have you given yourself enough time?

Example: I would like to add one serving of vegetables at lunch and dinner every day.

Write down a specific SMART goal you would like to work on for this week:

Your Action Plan

This week I will:

_____ (What)

_____ (When)

_____ (Where)

_____ (How much)

_____ (How often)

My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not very confident							Very confident		

Remember:

If your rating is 7 or higher, great! You believe you can do this!

If your rating is less than 7, then you may want to:

- Learn more about the area you want to work on or prepare yourself to work on that area
- Take smaller steps towards your goals. For example, you may adjust the different parts of your action plan such as “how much” or “how often”

My Notes:



Your Emotional Wellbeing: Part 2

Adapted from University Health Network (UHN) Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation Program

After your heart event, which can be emotionally difficult, it is important that you focus on your mental health. For example, it is common for heart patients to feel stressed, angry, anxious or sad. Your mental well-being is a key part of your overall health.

Our goal

To provide you with the tips and tools that you need to know:

1. Ways to help lower your and others’ stress
2. How to recognize and respond to self-criticism and denial as a barrier to adopting heart-healthy habits

Let’s reflect

1. What have you tried to help with stress?

Your Answer:

2. What worked well?

Your Answer:

3. What did not go as planned (barriers)?

Your Answer:

4. What got in the way?

Your Answer:

My Notes:

Week 12

Common barriers to lowering stress

When stresses are high you might feel like you have lost your sense of control. Knowing what is getting in the way is the first step to gaining back your sense of control.

Here are 7 common barriers to lowering stress:



Time



Energy level



Mood



Chronic pain



Work-life balance



Financial situation



Family crises

Sometimes, you can overcome these barriers by “problem-solving”, to make a healthy habit part of your daily life and testing them out.

For example:

Barrier: You already know that exercise is vital, for recovery and to reduce risks to your heart. But it's difficult to find time to exercise.

Developing a strategy: Try planning your day on a calendar and find blocks of time that are open. Try out exercise in those times spots.

New action plan: Try going for a walk at lunch rather than trying to add it to an already busy morning routine.

My Notes:

How to problem solve

If your action plan did not go as planned, don't worry. This is normal. Here are 6 steps to follow to help you problem solve.



Describe the problem

Your Answer:



What stopped you?

Was your goal too ambitious or complicated? Was it too easy?

Your Answer:



Think about other ways to achieve your goal

Do you need to change your goal? Make it smaller? More focused? Simpler?

Your Answer:



Pick one idea

Your Answer:

My Notes:



Build your next action plan

Your Answer:

Your
Action
Plan

This week I will:

_____ (What)

_____ (When)

_____ (Where)

_____ (How much)

_____ (How often)

My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not very confident						Very confident			



Try a new idea if the first one didn't work

This is a straightforward method that will work well most of the time. But what about those times you set a goal and have good intentions but don't end up achieving what you planned?

What do you say to yourself when you don't achieve what you set out to do?

When we encounter barriers and frustrations, we can respond “automatically”, as if by an emotional reflex. It can be helpful to map out your automatic responses, to understand the trigger situation, emotions, body sensations, behaviours, and thoughts. Mapping out an automatic response might look like this.



Situation

Who were you with?

What were you doing?

Where were you?

When did it happen?

Example: During cardiac rehab education group, I was reflecting on my frustrations in Rehab.

My Notes:



Emotions

What did you feel emotionally?

Example: I felt embarrassed, angry, and frustrated.



Body sensations and behaviour

What did you feel physically in your body?

What do you do or not do?

Example: I felt tightness in my chest and stomach...I want to leave this virtual session!!!



Automatic thoughts

What went through your mind? (thoughts, images, memories)?

If you had an image or memory, what did it mean to you?

Example: I bet I'm the only one who can't get their act together...I'm such a loser...I always do this; I never follow through with anything...What's wrong with me?

What do you notice about the automatic thoughts? Do they sound like...

Trap 1: harsh self-criticism



For example: "I'm a failure, I'm weak, stupid, a bad person, etc., etc."

Problem: This kind of harsh, over-generalizing self-talk may seem like you're being honest with yourself. But it actually damages your self-respect, reduces confidence in your own ability and corrodes motivation, leading you to feel stuck.

My Notes:

Series of horizontal lines for taking notes.

Trap 2: denial



For example: “I don’t see why I need to change”, “I haven’t really relapsed!”, or “Once (or twice or 3 times) won’t hurt!”

Problem: If you don’t have a realistic view that a habit is risky, or that you have actually had a slip or relapse, you can’t address it. This is another trap!

Denial isn’t a character flaw, it’s an emotional reaction that comes up when you feel your self-esteem is at risk. Often denial happens when you feel overwhelmed by the number of changes, frustration with a lack of information, or because the change isn’t your priority right now.

It is important to be prepared and not fall into the ‘traps’, or common inner reactions you may have when you feel you have failed, or if you slip (i.e., once or twice) or relapse (i.e., more sustained).

Self-compassion as a tool for success

A more balanced way of thinking is self-compassion. Self-compassion is made of three parts:

1. Self-kindness



Treat yourselves with the kindness, care, and support as you would someone else. Self-kindness is concerned with reducing stress by being *understanding* the reasons you may be having difficulty. This is different from *punishing* yourself, which reduces motivation.

2. Common humanity



Often when something goes wrong you might feel it shouldn’t (why me?) or that you are a flawed person and feel alone. Changing health-habits can be challenging. “Common humanity” is understanding that everybody goes through hard times, and no one is perfect. This is a normal part of life; you are not alone.

3. Mindfulness



Be aware of your feelings, even the painful ones. Mindfulness is about learning how to be with your feelings without judging them as good or bad, ignoring them, or overplaying them in your head. It is a balanced state of awareness.

My Notes:

What would a self-compassionate response sound like?

Try to respond to yourself with the compassionate qualities of warmth, kindness, and non-judgement.

When it is difficult to find compassionate words:

- Imagine a friend or a loved one having a similar problem. How would you respond to them?
- Or what would my best friend or another truly compassionate being say to me?
- What tone of voice would I need to be reassured?

Let’s make an action plan

If you experienced a barrier, how will you use mindful self-compassion to be successful? **What is one new thing you could try?**

Your Action Plan	This week I will:								
	_____	(What)							
	_____	(When)							
	_____	(Where)							
	_____	(How much)							
	_____	(How often)							
My confidence rating that I can do this plan is:									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not very confident					Very confident				

Resources to help you manage stress

Part of the self-management skill set is learning how to manage stress. Suggested resources for this topic on Cardiac College are:

- Read [Managing Stress for a Healthy Heart](#) ,and [Enjoying a Healthy Relationship and Sexual Intimacy](#)
- Watch THRIVE videos: [Sleep Well](#), [Strengthen Your Social Relationships](#), and [Manage Depression, Stress, and Burnout](#)

You can also:

- Speak with your rehabilitation trainer or nurse for a referral to our psychologist, or social worker
- Sign up for a Stress Management workshop
- Read *the Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook* (New Plenum)
- Talk to your doctor about how you are feeling

My Notes:
