Who needs a cardiac rehab program?
Many people of all ages who have heart conditions can benefit from a cardiac rehab program. You may benefit if you have or have had:
• A heart attack.
• A heart condition, such as coronary artery disease (CAD), angina or heart failure.
• Heart procedures or surgeries, including coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery, angioplasty, stenting, valve replacement, a pacemaker or implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD).

What happens in a rehab program?
• Rehab programs can help you change your lifestyle habits. These programs often take place at a hospital with a rehab team or with the help of your doctor, nurse or other healthcare providers.
• Many people find that rehab programs are very helpful after getting out of a hospital. They allow people to join a group to exercise and to get special help in making lifestyle changes.

During your rehabilitation program you’ll…
• Have a medical evaluation to figure out your needs and limitations. The medical staff uses this information to tailor a program to your needs.
• Exercise using a treadmill, bike, rowing machine or walking/jogging track.
• Be monitored for a change in symptoms by a nurse or another healthcare professional.
• Start slowly, following a safe physical activity program that gradually helps you become stronger.
• Slowly move into a more intensive program that lets you work longer and harder.
• Possibly begin strength training, if your doctor says you can.
• Have your heart rate, blood pressure and EKG monitored.

(continued)
After you’ve completed the program, you may feel better than ever. It is important to make these lifestyle changes a part of your everyday life!

**How else does it help me?**
- You may go to classes or get personal help to quit smoking and stay smoke-free.
- A nutritionist will help you create a healthy eating plan so you’ll know how to eat less of foods high in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol.
- You’ll improve your fitness level.
- You’ll be weighed and how to lose weight if you need to.
- You can learn relaxation skills to help manage and reduce your stress.
- You may meet others who’ve just been through a similar event.

**WHAT IS CARDIAC REHABILITATION?**

Take a few minutes to write your questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider. For example:

- Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721), or visit heart.org to learn more about heart disease and stroke.
- Sign up to get Heart Insight, a free magazine for heart patients and their families, at heartinsight.org.
- Connect with others sharing similar journeys with heart disease and stroke by joining our Support Network at heart.org/supportnetwork.

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one. Visit heart.org/answersbyheart to learn more.