Who qualifies for Cardiac Rehabilitation?

Patients with any of the following

- Any type of heart attack (ST elevated or non-ST elevated)
- Stable angina (predictable chest pain)
- Angioplasty or stent placement
- Coronary artery bypass surgery
- Any valve repair or replacement
- Heart failure (ejection fraction less than 35%)
- Heart transplant

Some private insurance companies may cover additional cardiac diagnosis.

What Does the Referral Process Look Like?

After your cardiac event, your cardiologist or surgeon should refer you to a cardiac rehabilitation program. If this does not happen, you may ask your primary physician or your cardiologist/surgeon for a referral. You have up to a year after your event to participate in cardiac rehab. When the cardiac rehab facility receives your referral, they will contact you to come in for orientation. This day will include a six minute walk test and explains the process and plans for following cardiac rehab days.

Guthrie County Hospital

An Affiliate of UnityPoint Health

Cardiac Rehabilitation Department
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Cardiac Rehabilitation Services

Guthrie County Hospital

An Affiliate of UnityPoint Health

Why is Cardiac Rehab Important?

Cardiac rehab is a medically supervised program, overseen by a doctor. It is designed to improve your heart health if you have experienced a heart attack, heart failure, or heart surgery.

More than 30% of deaths in the United States are due to heart disease. Over 90% of those deaths are due to preventable risk factors.

Yet, on average, only 1 out of every 4 patients that is eligible actually completes cardiac rehab.

Some of the many benefits:

- Reduced risk for another heart attack
- Lower overall risk of death
- Reduced symptoms (chest pain, difficulty breathing, etc.)
- Increased exercise stamina
- Improved health outcomes (blood work, blood pressure, etc.)
- Improved quality of life and psychosocial symptoms
- Reduced hospitalizations and need for other medical resources

Cardiac Rehab Goals

- Regular exercise
- Heart healthy diet
- Reduce stress
- Optimize medical therapy (medications)
- Quit smoking/using tobacco

What does Cardiac Rehab have to offer?

- Cardiac Rehab assesses your personal risk factors for cardiac disease
- Provides you education and support to assist in making healthy lifestyle changes
  - Losing/maintaining healthy weight
  - Eating well with heart disease
  - Avoiding tobacco
- Personalized exercise plan for during and after cardiac rehab
- Monitoring and improved blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, etc.
- Depression/mental health assessment and counseling as needed
- Improved communication with your doctor and other healthcare providers

Cardiac Rehabilitation Session Details

Insurance generally covers cardiac rehab at no cost to the patients for 36 sessions, though this may vary with some private insurances. Patients normally come to cardiac rehab 2-3 times a week. At GCH, exercise days are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

A typical cardiac rehab session takes approximately 45-60 minutes. It starts with a slower paced warm up, followed by about 30 minutes of continuous exercise, then a cool down period. Equipment used at GCH includes a Nustep, a treadmill, and handweights/stretching exercises.

During the exercise session, the nurse will monitor the electrical function of your heart on the computer screen. Your blood pressure will be taken throughout the exercise session as well. Any signs and symptoms of furthering cardiac issues can be reported to the nurse, giving patients peace of mind about returning to exercise after a cardiac event.

Cardiac rehab sessions also include education. GCH has education binders that discuss a variety of topics (exercise, diet, medications, psychological health, etc.)