

## What's in it for Me?

The goals of cardiac rehab are different for each patient. In helping set your personal goals, your health care team will look at your general health, your personal heart problem, your risks for future heart problems, your doctor's recommendations and, of course, your own preferences.

Cardiac rehab can reduce your symptoms and your chances of having more heart problems. And it has many other benefits:

- Exercise tones your muscles and improves your energy level and spirits. It helps both your heart and your body get stronger and work better. Exercise also can get you back to work and other activities faster.
- A healthy diet can lower cholesterol, control weight, and help prevent or control high blood pressure and other problems such as diabetes. Plus, you will feel better and have more energy.
- Cardiac rehab can help you quit smoking. Kicking the habit means less risk of lung cancer, emphysema and bronchitis, as well as less risk of a heart attack, stroke and other heart and blood vessel problems. It means more energy, and it means better health for your loved ones.
- You can learn to manage stress instead of letting it manage you. You will feel better and improve your heart health.



## Contact / Locations

### The Heart & Vascular Center (Phase 2)

605 Sharon Road  
Beaver, PA 15009  
724-773-4507

### The Heart & Vascular Center (Phase 2)

12 Quaker Village Shopping Center  
Ohio River Boulevard; Suite 2A  
Leetsdale, PA 15056  
724-773-4636

### Heritage Valley Kennedy (Phase 2 & Phase 3)

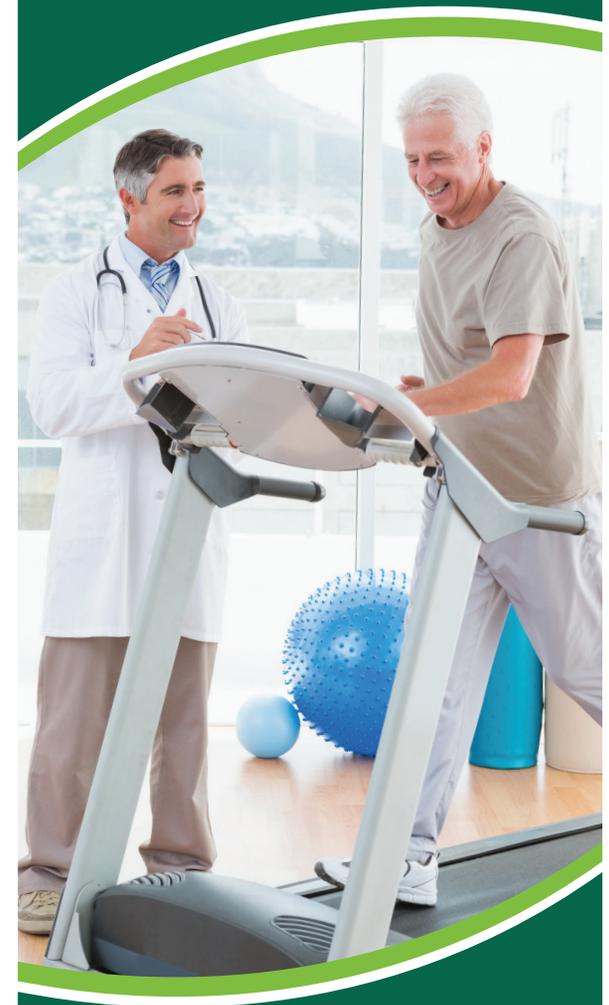
25 Heckel Road  
McKees Rocks, PA 15136  
412-777-6849

[www.heritagevalley.org](http://www.heritagevalley.org)  
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# Cardiac Rehabilitation



Uniquely Connected. For Life.<sup>SM</sup>  
**HERITAGE VALLEY**  
HEALTH SYSTEM

## Purpose

Cardiac Rehabilitation (rehab) services are designed to help patients with heart disease recover faster and return to full and productive lives. Cardiac rehab includes exercise, education, counseling, and learning ways to live a healthier life. Together with medical and surgical treatments, cardiac rehab can help you feel better and live a healthier life.

You can benefit from cardiac rehab if you have angina, heart failure, heart attack, open heart surgery, PCTA or Stent.

Cardiac Rehab can make a difference. It is a safe and effective way to help you:

- feel better faster
- get stronger
- reduce stress
- reduce risks of future heart problems
- live longer

Almost everyone with heart disease can benefit from some type of cardiac rehab. No one is too old or young. Women benefit from cardiac rehab as much as men.

## Coronary Disease Risk Factors You Can Control

- Smoking
- High Blood Pressure
- High Blood Cholesterol
- Sedentary Lifestyle
- Overweight
- Diabetes
- Stress

## Cardiac Rehab Team

Cardiac rehab involves many health care providers and includes **doctors, nurses, rehab specialists, exercise physiologists,** and **dietitians.**

But the most important member of the team is **you.** No one else can make you exercise, quit smoking or eat a healthier diet.

## How Do I Get Started?

Cardiac rehab education begins in the hospital after a heart attack, heart surgery or other heart treatment. It continues in an outpatient setting after you leave the hospital. Once you have learned the skills of heart-healthy living, you should continue to use them for life. No matter how difficult it may seem, your hard work in cardiac rehab will have lifetime benefits.

**Phase 1** is largely comprised of your recovery time in the hospital and consists of medical evaluation, reassurance and education regarding Coronary Artery Disease (CAD), corrections of cardiac misconceptions, risk factors, mobilization and discharge planning.

**Phase 2** is held in an outpatient setting at The Heart and Vascular Centers in Beaver and Leetsdale and at Heritage Valley Kennedy. In addition to exercising, you will receive education and encouragement to control your risk factors. We will keep you and your physician up-to-date with progress reports during this time. *You will need a physician referral to begin Phase 2 of your cardiac rehab program.*

**Phase 3** is voluntary, is a continuation of Phase 2, and is only held at Heritage Valley Kennedy. While it is not physician-monitored, our exercise physiologists will continue to work with you to maintain your healthy lifestyle. This phase is extremely beneficial, and many patients continue to participate for years!

## How Does Cardiac Rehab Work?

**Exercise Training** helps you learn how to exercise safely, strengthen your muscles, and improve your stamina. Your exercise plan will be based on your individual ability, needs and interests.

**Education, Counseling, and Training** helps you understand your heart condition and find ways to reduce your risk of future heart problems. The cardiac rehab team will help you learn how to cope with the stress of adjusting to a new lifestyle and to deal with your fears about the future.

Cardiac rehab helps you recognize and change unhealthy habits you may have and establish new, more healthy ones. Your rehab may last 6 weeks or 3 months. It is important that you complete the recommended rehab plan.

## Is it Safe for Me?

Cardiac rehab is safe. Studies show that serious health problems caused by cardiac rehab are rare. The cardiac rehab team is trained to handle emergencies. Your health care provider can help you choose a plan that is safe for you. Many patients can safely exercise without supervision once they learn their own exercise plan. Checking how your heart reacts and adapts to exercise is an important part of cardiac rehab. You will be connected to an EKG monitor while you exercise.

## Aerobic Exercise

Aerobic exercise raises your pulse rate and makes you perspire. It helps improve the flow of oxygen-rich blood throughout your body. Strength training, such as using weights, improves your muscle strength and your stamina. Both types of exercise in the right amount are safe and important for your heart health.

## How Can I Get the Most Out of Cardiac Rehab?

Studies show that controlling your risk factors for heart disease can help you lead a healthier life. So make sure your cardiac rehab plan works for you. Here's how:

**Plan.** Work with your health care team to design a plan to meet your needs.

**Communicate.** Ask questions. Report changes in your feelings or symptoms.

**Take charge of your recovery.** No one else can do it for you. Your new lifestyle is healthy for your heart, so stick with it for life.

Sometimes people who have big changes in their lives feel depressed. Some people with heart problems feel depressed when they find out about their disease or after surgery. When you feel depressed, it is hard to do things to help yourself get better. Cardiac rehab may help you feel better, but if you are seriously depressed, tell your doctor. Depression can be treated.