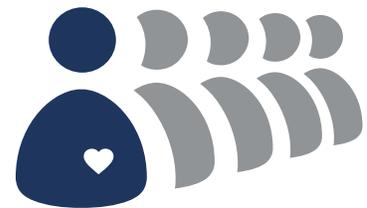


# HEALTHY STEPS TO TAKE AFTER A HEART ATTACK



One in five people over age 45 who have had a heart attack will experience a second one within five years. If you've survived a heart attack, follow these steps to help prevent a recurrence:



## CHECKLIST FOR RECOVERY



- Follow your recovery plan
- Stay alert
- Make healthy choices
- Create a support network



### FOLLOW YOUR RECOVERY PLAN

- **Go to follow-up medical appointments** — Heart attack survivors who have a timely medical exam are less likely to be hospitalized again. It's likely your cardiologist will want to schedule exams on a regular basis.
- **Take your medicine** — More than one-third of medication-related hospital readmissions are caused by patients not following their treatment plans. If you're not taking the medication, you're not gaining the benefit.
- **Arrange for cardiac rehabilitation** — Cardiac rehab is a medically supervised exercise and counseling program to help in recovery after a heart attack or heart procedure. Work with your doctor to determine eligibility and cost.





## MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES

- **Get physically active** — Exercising after a heart attack, even if it's just a bit, can help in your recovery. Start with cardiac rehab to get comfortable in a supervised setting and build up to doing regular exercise on your own.
- **Eat a healthy diet** — Eat more fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains and other heart healthy foods. The American Heart Association offers details in its **diet and lifestyle recommendations**.
- **Stop smoking** — Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your overall health. For those who have had a heart attack, quitting smoking will reduce their chances of having another heart attack by 50 percent.



## STAY ALERT

- **Manage risk factors** — Pay attention to risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, and diabetes. Work with your doctor to assess your numbers.
- **Pay attention to symptoms** — You're familiar with the **common symptoms**: pressure in the chest area, a cold sweat, feeling faint. Women may also experience nausea, shortness of breath, or extreme exhaustion. Seek medical help immediately if you suspect another heart attack. Quick medical treatment can save heart muscle.



## CREATE A SUPPORT NETWORK

- **Make social connections to avoid feeling alone** — Isolation can be a risk for a recurrent heart attack. Friends, relatives, and other heart attack survivors can be a social lifeline. Consider joining the American Heart Association **online support network**.
- **Seek professional help if you're depressed** — Feelings of sadness or depression after a heart attack may occur because you don't know what to expect or you feel overly tired. Depression in heart patients can increase the risk for a heart attack or death.

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Statistics were provided by American Heart Association.

