
Cardiac Rehabilitation and Secondary Prevention Program

Toronto Rehab's Cardiac Rehabilitation and Secondary Prevention Program is one of the world's largest and most respected cardiac rehabilitation programs. It is based on a scientifically-proven and medically-supervised course of exercise, education and lifestyle modification. Each year, more than 1,800 people who have experienced cardiac illness or who have cardiovascular disease or major risk factors participate in the program and learn to improve their cardiovascular fitness and health and reduce their risk of cardiac events.

Why rehab?

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of hospitalization and death in Canada. Cardiac rehabilitation can help people increase their lifespan and quality of life by improving their overall cardiovascular strength and fitness and limiting the physiological and psychological effects of cardiac disease. Research shows that cardiac rehabilitation improves patients' quality of life, capacity to function, and emotional well-being, and promotes a faster return to work. The evidence shows that participating in comprehensive, exercise-based cardiac rehabilitation programs can reduce the risk of dying of a subsequent cardiac event by up to 50 per cent.

Cardiac rehabilitation works differently for different people. Since the Toronto Rehab program began in 1968, more than 40,000 people have graduated. Some have lost 20 pounds or more. Others have run marathons. Yet others have danced at their children's weddings. Nearly all say Toronto Rehab taught them how to get fit and stay healthy and has given them a new lease on life.

How the program works

Cardiovascular rehabilitation involves an individualized program of assessment, physical activity, education, healthy lifestyle behaviours and psychosocial support. The Toronto Rehab program is delivered by an interprofessional team of doctors, physical and occupational therapists, exercise physiologists, cardiovascular technologists, nurses, dietitians, educators, social workers, and psychologists. This team works with each patient to personalize activities to their needs and abilities, and to ensure that they achieve their rehabilitation goals. Patients visit once a week for a 30-minute education session and up to an hour's exercise. Patients are encouraged to exercise three to four times a week on their own. Upon completion of the six to eight month program, patients graduate to join the cardiac rehab alumni program, Heart Health for Life

The Cardiac Rehabilitation and Secondary Prevention Program operates out of Toronto Rehab's Rumsey Centre. State-of-the-art human performance testing labs, indoor and outdoor walking tracks, and a 100-seat lecture theatre are all designed specifically for the program.

Specialized services

Cardiac Rehab @ Home Service - Toronto Rehab offers an innovative home-based cardiac rehabilitation service for people who are unable to attend our traditional on-site program because of work demands, transportation, or

over

distance. This service includes aerobic and resistance training supported by regular interaction, counselling and education by Internet and phone. Early results indicate that patients engaged in the @ Home service do just as well as patients who participate in the on-site program.

Diabetes, Exercise and Healthy Lifestyle Service - This is one of only a few services in Canada that teaches adults who have diabetes or are at elevated risk of developing it, how to manage or prevent the disease through a structured, intensive lifestyle modification program. Physical activity has an especially important role in improving sugar control and reducing cardiovascular risk. Individualized exercise and education programs help participants improve and control their diabetes and quality of life through a healthier lifestyle.

About our patients

Anyone with a history of cardiovascular disease, congestive heart failure, heart attack, cardiac surgery, or type 2 diabetes, or who has risk factors for these conditions, can benefit from cardiac rehabilitation.

- Toronto Rehab's patients range in age from 30-90. The average age is 62.
- Thirty per cent of patients are women.
- About a third of our patients have undergone bypass surgery. Another third has suffered a heart attack. Others are at high risk for developing heart disease and have two or more documented risk factors, such as high cholesterol or blood pressure or diabetes.

Leading-edge research

Toronto Rehab conducts high-impact research that leads to advances in knowledge, treatment and technology that have a valuable impact on people affected by serious injury, illness and aging, and their caregivers. Our rehabilitation research program is one of North America's largest and most diverse. Through close collaboration between Toronto Rehab researchers and clinicians, innovations in research are rapidly translated to the clinical setting. This helps ensure that our patients and others around the world can benefit from the newest therapies and technologies.

Toronto Rehab scientists are pioneering advances in cardiac rehabilitation, such as:

- **Reducing mortality by half** – New findings by Toronto Rehab scientists Dr. David Alter and Dr. Paul Oh, Medical Director of the Cardiac Rehabilitation and Secondary Prevention Program, and others have shown that people who participate in cardiac rehabilitation programs after experiencing a major heart event cut the risk of dying from a subsequent heart event in half. Only 25% of people who could benefit from cardiac rehabilitation actually receive it. Toronto Rehab scientists are investigating the reasons for this.
- **Finding the optimal exercise prescription** – A key component of cardiac rehabilitation is physical activity. The Toronto Rehab cardiac team has found that the right volume and intensity of exercise is important to maximize gains in function, minimize risk factors and change cardiovascular health. Toronto Rehab adjunct scientists Drs. Scott Thomas and Jack Goodman, and research coordinator Susan Marzolini, are working to identify optimal doses.

For more information

Marketing and Communications, 416-597-3422, ext. 3837

communications@torontorehab.on.ca