Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program Orientation

Congratulations! You are taking the first step toward a better quality of life by joining this Pulmonary Rehabilitation program. The program will include exercise and self-care instructions. Here is some information to help you prepare for the program.

How often, how long?
Classes will be held 2 to 3 times a week for up to 12 weeks, depending on your needs and/or insurance coverage. How often you need to come and how many weeks you need are determined by your initial and ongoing assessments and goals for Pulmonary Rehab. We recommend that you attend on a regular basis to gain the full benefit of rehab. Please call us to discuss any absence.

What does the exercise class include?
Each exercise class is one-hour, and has 3 parts: warm up, strength and endurance training, and cool down.

Warm-up period (5 minutes)
of gentle stretching
• Gradually increases your heart rate
• Improves flexibility

Strength and endurance training (15 to 40 minutes)
Aerobic exercise
• Walking, treadmill, biking and/or stepper
• Benefits your heart and lungs

Resistance training
• Hand weights and/or
• Theraband tubing

Cool-down period
• 5 minutes
• Slowly reduces heart rate, blood pressure and breathing to resting level

What should I wear?
Wear loose-fitting clothes. Cotton or micro fiber materials are preferred because they can absorb moisture and let heat escape. Wear athletic shoes to help prevent injuries to your feet and legs and provide support.

Will I be monitored?
During all exercise your heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen levels will be monitored for your safety. Your heart rhythm may also be monitored. Rehab specialists will be checking how well you handle the exercise and coaching you during each session. Your rehab specialist may have you perform a Pulmonary Walk test to find out your baseline for safe exercise. This test may be repeated at various times during your program.
A program designed for you
You will notice everyone doing different things during the exercise sessions. Some will be walking, while others may be biking or using hand weights. Your exercise prescription is based on the results of your initial evaluation. This exercise guideline will be written for your personal needs, just as a doctor prescribes individual medications. Therefore, it is important for you not to compare yourself with others but to follow your prescription. We will record your progress throughout each session and send regular reports to your doctor.

Recommendations for your safety
• Do not eat heavy meals for 1 hour before exercising. Water is OK any time and is encouraged during exercise.
• Know your training heart rate. Don’t be afraid to ask for help when trying to find your pulse.
• Do the recommended breathing techniques the staff will teach you.
• Do not hold your breath during any activities such as sit-ups, long slow stretches or other exercises. This causes stress on your heart and blood vessels.
• Avoid very hot and cold showers after exercise.
• Avoid chewing gum during exercise.
• Take your medicines as ordered. Bring your rescue inhaler (if one is prescribed for you). You may find that using your rescue inhaler 15 minutes prior to exercise is helpful.
• Use your portable oxygen (if prescribed).
• Plan ahead to conserve energy. For example, get clothes ready the evening before rehab and/or bathe the evening before rehab to lessen your fatigue on rehab days.

Know your limitations
It is normal to be somewhat short of breath during exercise. We will ask you to rate your shortness of breath. It is safe to exercise to a level of moderate to somewhat severe shortness of breath. If your shortness of breath reaches severe, slow your pace or stop and regain your breath. Use the controlled breathing pattern with all exercise.

What is a MET (Metabolic Equivalent)?
Energy costs are presented in the form of “MET tables.” Energy costs range from easy self-care activities to difficult industrial and recreational activities.

One MET is the amount of oxygen used by the body while at rest. For example, walking on level ground at 1.0 mph is about 2 METs. This is two times your resting level.

Based on the results of your Pulmonary Walk tests and exercise progression, the rehab specialist will prescribe activities that are in the safe MET tables for you to do. As you progress in Pulmonary Rehab you may be able to increase to the next MET table level or higher.

A word of caution: energy cost of activities can be increased by many factors, including psychological stress, temperature, humidity, clothing, etc. Your heart rate should be checked often when doing new activities to avoid going over your training heart rate.

Benefits of exercise
Being inactive can cause muscle weakness, anxiety, and shallow breathing. Medical research has shown that exercise (when using breathing techniques) can help break this cycle. Thus it can create a better quality of life for a person with lung disease.

Exercise can also help prevent heart disease. A person’s ability to meet the demands of daily routines is greatly increased with regular exercise. Through exercise, the heart becomes stronger and better able to meet its own and the skeletal muscles’ demand for oxygen. Endurance exercise actually promotes growth of new blood vessels in the active muscles of the body.

On the next page is a list of many benefits of exercise. Note that not all are physical benefits. Some are psychological benefits as well.

Continued
Exercise can increase:
- Blood flow through the heart’s arteries
- Muscle strength
- Heart muscle strength
- Blood flow throughout your body
- Blood oxygen uptake
- Thyroid function
- Good cholesterol (HDL) level
- Preserve bone health

Exercise can decrease
- Bad cholesterol (LDL) level
- Blood sugar levels
- Weight (for those who need to lose weight)
- Platelet “stickiness,” reducing artery clots
- Blood pressure, if too high
- Stress
- Occurrence of irregular heart rhythms
- Tolerance to everyday stress

Pulmonary rehab education
During your program, you will attend group and/or individual classes. Some of the topics include:
- Infection Prevention
- Smoking and Irritants Prevention
- Stress Management
- Breathing Techniques
- Dietary Recommendations
- Energy Conservation Techniques
- How the Lungs Function
- Pulmonary Medications
- Exercise Principles
- Weather Guidelines

This education can help you create a better lifestyle and help you to breathe easier. Your spouse or significant others are welcome to attend, as you make a joint commitment toward lifestyle changes. Our goal is to help you and your family cope with a chronic lung problem.

Benefits of attending a Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program
Recent research studies strongly support the benefits of attending a Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program. This is the reason your doctor has ordered Pulmonary Rehabilitation for you. The research shows that many patients in these programs benefit from:
- Reduced symptoms (shortness of breath, fatigue)
- Increased muscle strength and muscle mass
- Increased exercise levels
- Increased knowledge about pulmonary disease and its management
- Enhanced ability to perform activities of daily living
- Improved health-related quality of life
- Improved psychosocial symptoms (reversal of anxiety and depression, increased self-confidence)
- Reduced hospitalizations and use of medical resources
- Return to work and leisure activities
- Increase quality of life for you and your significant others

What happens next?
When you have finished the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program, it is very important to continue with the exercise. You can do this on your own, or for a small fee, you can exercise here, up to twice a week in our Pulmonary Maintenance Program. Your Pulmonary Rehabilitation specialist will give you more information when you have completed the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program.