Cardiovascular Rehabilitation
Cardiovascular Rehabilitation at The University of Toledo Medical Center

While a heart attack or other heart condition can have a major impact on how long you live and the quality of your life, taking care of your heart can dramatically reduce your risk of living a shortened and disabled life. The cardiovascular rehabilitation program at The University of Toledo Medical Center (UTMC) helps patients with heart and vascular disease improve their health and continue on with their lives.

Cardiovascular rehabilitation is recommended for patients after a variety of heart related procedures or events, such as a heart attack, angioplasty or coronary stents, bypass surgery, valve surgery, heart transplant or after someone has been diagnosed with stable angina (chest pain).

The four E's
UT Medical Center's cardiovascular rehabilitation program focuses on "the four E's:"

1. Exercise
2. Eat right
3. Educate
4. Effectively manage stress

Exercise
Patients of UTMC's cardiovascular rehabilitation program undergo therapy in an electrocardiogram (EKG) - monitored exercise program three times a week for 12 weeks. To ensure that a patient's exercise program is safe and effective, all patients undergo a cardiopulmonary exercise (CPX) test at the beginning and end of the program to evaluate their work capacity.

Eat right
A healthy diet is essential to improving or maintaining heart health. UTMC's cardiovascular rehab program has a dedicated dietitian who develops a personalized eating plan for each patient.

Educate
Educating patients is a very important aspect of cardiovascular rehabilitation. When patients understand the nature of their cardiovascular disease, how it develops and how it can be controlled, they are learning how to take better care of themselves.

In UTMC's cardiovascular rehabilitation program, patients meet one-on-one with physicians, nurses, dietitians and exercise physiologists. They attend lectures on a range of topics related to heart health and have one-on-one sessions with professionals who teach on topics such as smoking cessation, controlling diabetes and stress management.

Effectively manage stress
Patients need to first identify the levels and nature of stress they may be experiencing. Then patients are helped in determining how they can do a better job of managing the different stresses in their lives. The cardiovascular rehab staff helps patients choose and employ daily strategies for managing various types of life stressors.

Tracking progress
One of the most effective ways to motivate patients to make therapeutic lifestyle changes is to evaluate their progress in the cardiovascular rehab program.

UTMC's program tracks each patient's progress with three pre- and post-evaluations.

First, a patient's abdominal girth is measured before and after the program. Second, the distance a patient is able to walk in 12 minutes is measured. Finally, the results of their CPX tests are reviewed. This data is shared with patients to help keep them motivated. It's also used in research to further improve the program.

Lifestyle changes save lives
Patients who undergo multi-disciplinary cardiovascular rehabilitation have a 25-30 percent reduction in death from heart disease as compared to patients who do not undergo cardiovascular rehab. Their ability to live full, satisfying lives is also greatly enhanced.

Medicare and most health insurance companies provide benefits for cardiovascular rehabilitation. UTMC's cardiovascular rehabilitation program is the only program currently operating within the Toledo city limits. UTMC's cardiovascular rehabilitation program has the largest facility in the Toledo area and is staffed by professionals certified by the American College of Sports Medicine.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please call 419-383-5378.