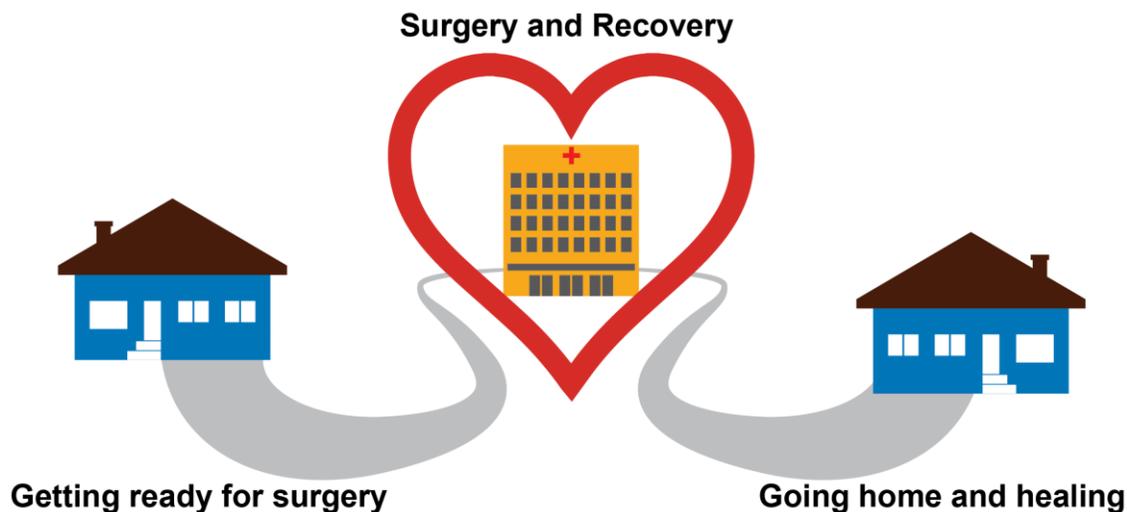


# Your Heart Surgery Journey

## Preparing While in Hospital



### ***Be involved in your journey...***

Use this booklet to help you:

- ✓ Maintain your ability move and do everyday activities
- ✓ Set goals
- ✓ Keep track of your questions
- ✓ Plan ahead for your recovery after surgery
- ✓ Find community supports and programs that will help you

**Keep this booklet with you during your hospital stay.**

## Your Heart Surgery Journey

You are going to have heart surgery. We break this time frame into phases: before surgery, recovery in the hospital then when you get home. When you take an active part now, you can help your recovery after surgery.

### **Before surgery**

- This booklet outlines activities and tasks you can do to help prepare for your recovery.
- We call this time 'prehabilitation' or 'prehab'.

### **Recovery in hospital**

- While in hospital, your nurses and therapists help you to continue your 'prehab' activities.
- They might give you added activities to complete.

### **When you get home**

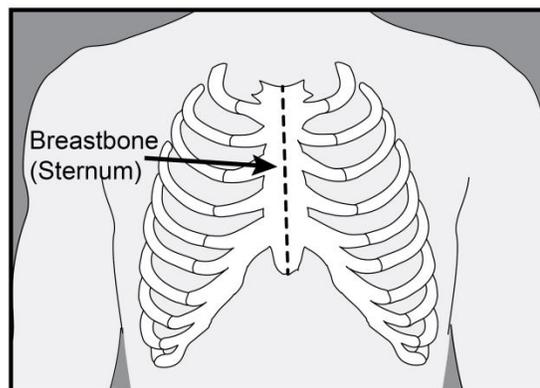
- Plan to go to Cardiac Rehabilitation.  
There are programs in many communities in the Lower Mainland. We ask you to go to the one closest to you.
- If you did not get printed information about Cardiac Rehabilitation with this booklet, please ask your nurse.

If you have any questions about your heart surgery journey, speak to your nurse or physiotherapist. We are here to help.

## Taking Care of Your Breastbone (Sternal Precautions)

Most heart surgery is done by cutting through a person's breastbone (sternum).

It is important to practice 'sternal precautions' before surgery so you are familiar and comfortable with them after surgery.



Breastbone cut along the dotted line

'Sternal precautions' help make sure that there is no straining or separating of the sternum while the bone is healing.

### Sternal Precautions

- ♥ **Do** log roll onto your side to get in and out of bed.
- ♥ **Do** support your chest when you cough or sneeze by wrapping your arms across your chest and hugging yourself.
  
- ♥ **Do not** use your arms to get yourself out of a chair.
- ♥ **Do not** lie on your stomach.
- ♥ **Do not** swing your arms vigorously.
- ♥ **Do not** lift anything over 2 to 5 kilograms (5 to 10 pounds).
- ♥ **Do not** push or pull with one or both hands or arms.
- ♥ **Do not** strain or bear down during a bowel movement.
- ♥ **Do not** do heavy household chores, such as raking or mowing the lawn, vacuuming.

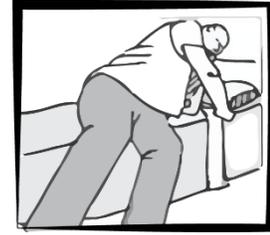
## Getting In Bed

1. Sit on the edge of the bed and cross your arms loosely over your chest.

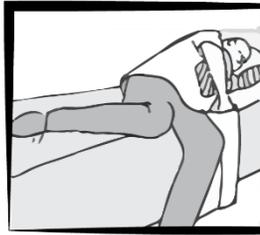


2. Lean sideways.

**Gently** support yourself with your hands until you are lying on your side.



3. Lift your legs onto the bed one after the other.



4. If done correctly, you should be lying on your side.



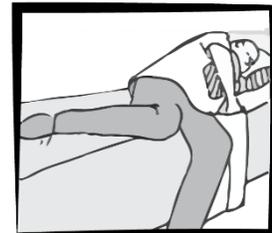
It is okay to lie on your back, but not your stomach.

## Getting Out of Bed

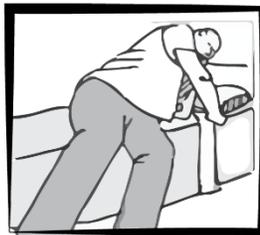
1. Log roll onto your side with your arms in front and your knees bent.



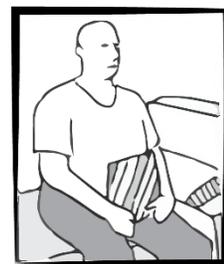
2. Drop your legs over the side of the bed.



3. **Gently** push sideways with your elbow nearest the bed while you push on the bed with the top arm.



4. Take a moment to rest at the side of the bed before standing.



Use your trunk muscles to help you sit up.

Images © Fraser Health

It will take several weeks for your breastbone (sternum) to heal. During your recovery, it is important to follow sternal precautions both in the hospital and at home.

While you are healing, it will be harder to do everyday activities such as getting out of bed, getting dressed, and making meals.

Consider the questions below. Are there areas where you might need added help during your recovery?

	Yes	No
Do you feel emotionally prepared for the surgery and/or recovery period?		
If you are currently working, do you have the finances to support yourself during the recovery period?		
Do you have someone who can stay with you for the first few days after you get home?		
Do you have someone to help you with errands or daily tasks? Examples: grocery shopping, getting to and from appointments, household chores (such as laundry, vacuuming)		
Are you able to easily get up from low surfaces, such as off a toilet, couch, chair, or bed?		
Do you have clothing that is loose fitting and easy to put on and take off so you don't strain your breastbone?		

**If you checked off 'No' to any of these questions,** talk to your healthcare team about helpful solutions and resources.

## Breathing Exercises

We show you how to do different breathing exercises: deep breathing, coughing, and breathing using a tool called an incentive spirometer. These exercises will help your lungs remain at their best possible function while you wait for surgery. Breathing exercises help to lessen the changes of problems after surgery. While in the hospital, your nurse will remind you to do these exercises several times each day.

**If you smoke...** the best thing you can do is stop smoking as soon as possible. The longer you go without smoking, the greater the benefits to your health.

Quitting smoking will help you:

- heal faster
- have fewer complications
- lower the risk of infection
- reduce the stress on your heart
- speed up bone healing time
- improve blood flow to your heart and body

Aim to quit a full month before surgery. However, quitting just a few days before surgery is still has benefit.

There are many free services for those who want to quit smoking (see page 11).

You won't be able to smoke while in the hospital. We can offer nicotine replacement therapy to keep you comfortable (such as nicotine patches and lozenges).

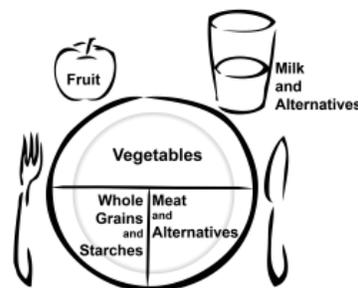
Fraser Health has a Smoking-free Policy.

This means the smoking of tobacco, cannabis, and e cigarettes is not allowed in any of our buildings or the surrounding property.

## Healthy eating

To prepare your body and help it head, your body needs healthy foods.

'Eating well' before surgery means eating a balanced diet with healthy foods, including vegetables, fruit, lean protein, as well as food rich in iron and calcium. You should eat at least 1 high protein food at every meal (such as meat, chicken, egg, beans, lentils, cheese, nuts).



In the hospital, 'eating well' means eating at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the food supplied by the hospital. Your family or friends can bring you food from home to eat if you prefer (instead of the hospital meals). You can also add snacks as you wish.

	Yes	No
My family is able to help with meals, or bring me food.		
I would like to speak with a dietitian about food choices and healthy eating.		

**If you wish to speak with a dietitian, tell your nurse.**

## Preventing infection

Cleaning your hands, brushing your teeth, and showering regularly help to remove germs that can cause infections.

Cleaning your hands is the most important thing you can do to reduce the spread of germs.

At home, wash your hands with soap and water before eating or drinking, and after visiting a bathroom.



In the hospital:

- Use hand sanitizer (alcohol-based hand rub):
  - before eating or drinking
  - before you leave your room
  - after sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose
- Use soap and water when your hands are dirty or after visiting a bathroom.

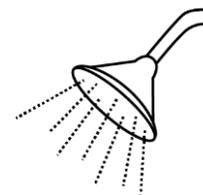
You should clean your mouth at least 2 times every day (example: morning and evening).

Have your family bring you a toothbrush and toothpaste. If your family cannot bring these items in for you, ask your nurse for teeth cleaning supplies.



The night before your surgery, you will be instructed to clean your body with Chlorhexidine Gluconate 2% solution. Remember not to rinse off the solution.

Ask your nurse if you are able to shower after surgery. After every shower, put on clean clothes or clean hospital pajamas.



## My Plan

**Estimated Date of Surgery:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Keep active.** Activity and exercise help strengthen your muscles and improves blood flow.

### Before surgery, I will...

1. Practice protecting my chest by:
  - ✓ Log rolling in and out of bed
  - ✓ Hugging a pillow when getting out of a chair/standing up, and when coughing
2. Maintain my strength and mobility by:
  - ✓ Going for a walk at least 2 times every day
3. Keep healthy and prevent infection by:
  - ✓ Washing my hands after using the toilet and before meals
  - ✓ Brushing my teeth in the morning and evening
  - ✓ Showering each day when able
4. Do my deep breathing exercises every hour while awake.
5. Track the food I eat to make sure I am eating enough protein, vegetables, and fruit.

While in the hospital, it can be hard to be active. Doing small things like walking around your room and the unit as well as sitting up in a chair for meals can help you keep your strength up.

**To keep you safe in the hospital,** ask your family to bring in non-slip footwear like slippers with a closed heel and rubber sole.

<b>My Plan</b>	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Moving Around</b>							
Log Roll in and out of bed							
Sit down and stand up without using my arms							
Deep breathing and coughing using incentive spirometer 10 times every hour							
Sit in a chair for <b>all</b> meals							
Take a walk at least 2 times a day							
<b>Washing/Cleaning</b>							
Shower as able							
Brush my teeth in the morning and evening							
<b>Eating</b>							
I ate _____ of my meals (all, ¾, ½, ¼)  My appetite was _____ (good, fair, poor)	Breakfast						
	Lunch						
	Dinner						
	Snacks						

<b>My Plan</b>	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Moving Around</b>							
Log Roll in and out of bed							
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Sit in a chair for <b>all</b> meals							
Take a walk at least 2 times a day							
<b>Washing/Cleaning</b>							
Shower as able							
Brush my teeth in the morning and evening							
<b>Eating</b>							
I ate _____ of my meals (all, $\frac{3}{4}$ , $\frac{1}{2}$ , $\frac{1}{4}$ )  My appetite was _____ (good, fair, poor)	Breakfast						
	Lunch						
	Dinner						
	Snacks						

## Cardiac Rehabilitation

Cardiac rehabilitation is a medically supervised program offered in the community. The focus is to help improve the health and well-being of people who have heart problems.

Cardiac rehabilitation programs include exercise training, education on heart healthy living, and counseling to reduce stress and help you return to an active life.

People with heart problems who take part in a cardiac rehabilitation program after heart surgery usually do better than those who don't.

Benefits of taking part in cardiac rehabilitation include:

- ✓ More energy
- ✓ Less anxiety
- ✓ Improved quality of life
- ✓ Lowered risk of future heart problems

Before your surgery, you might want to explore what is offered in your community.

Before you go home from the hospital, your nurse can help you to register for a cardiac rehabilitation program near your home.

## Community Supports and Programs

Offered by Fraser Health	
<p><b>Cardiac Rehabilitation and Prevention Programs</b></p> <p>Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre 32900 Marshall Road 604-851-4700 ext. 642631</p> <p>Jim Pattison Outpatient Care and Surgery Centre 9750 140<sup>th</sup> Street 604-582-4550 ext. 763859</p> <p>Peach Arch Hospital 15521 Russell Avenue 604-535-4500 ext. 7676</p> <p>Royal Columbian Hospital 330 E Columbia Street 604-520-4253</p>	<p><b>Healthy Heart Program</b></p> <p>Burnaby Hospital 3935 Kinkaid Street 604-412-6440</p>
Offered by the YMCA	Offered by The Lung Association
<p>Healthy Heart Program Office 604-521-5801</p>	<p> <b>www.quitnow.ca</b> Free quit smoking program you can do on your own. Lots of helpful tools and resources.</p> <p> <b>Call 1-877-455-2233</b> A friendly, professional helpline. Talk to a Quit Coach (or their assistant) anytime, day or night.</p> <p> <b>Text 'QUITNOW' to 654321</b> Get supportive messages anytime, anywhere.</p>







[www.fraserhealth.ca](http://www.fraserhealth.ca)

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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To order: [patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca](http://patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca)

