

WORKING GROUP FOR THE PREVENTION AND REHABILITATION OF HEART DISEASE

► TREATING ANGINA

If at any time you experience chest pain or discomfort:

- Stop whatever you are doing and lie or sit down
- Relax, breathe deeply, place a nitroglycerin tablet under your tongue and try not to swallow any saliva (first dose)
- Wait for 8 to 10 minutes and, if the pain has not gone away, place another nitroglycerin tablet under your tongue (second dose)
- If after another 8 to 10 minutes the pain has still not gone away, place a third nitroglycerin tablet under your tongue and telephone 112 or 061 and request urgent medical attention
- Remember that you must not take 2 doses at once, as this can cause your blood pressure to drop sharply
- If you suffer from frequent attacks of angina, inform your doctor

► SUPPORT GROUPS AND ASSOCIATIONS

It is recommended that you join heart-patient associations. There are self-help groups that will help you and your family to overcome the disease and help you to continue looking after yourself in the correct manner.

► HEART-DISEASE PREVENTION AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES

The Cardiology Departments of some hospitals have Heart-Disease Prevention and Rehabilitation Units that offer programmes to help you understand the disease better, control its effects and achieve a better quality of life. These programmes examine subjects such as physical activity, psychological factors and help in returning to work. At the Prevention Unit you will enjoy the full support of a team of expert professionals.

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Grupo de Trabajo
Prevención y Rehabilitación Cardíaca

ADVICE FOR HEART PATIENTS AFTER BEING RELEASED FROM HOSPITAL

This pamphlet is intended for patients who, like you, have suffered from heart disease and have recently been released from hospital. It offers a range of advice to help your life get back to normal. In your release form you will find information regarding your condition, treatment, recommendations and care plan and the programme of check-ups that will need to be made. Please read this information carefully and if in doubt consult a member of the professional team that treated you.

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► THE DISEASE

Heart disease can be caused by problems in the anatomy of the heart itself (muscle, valves, etc.), changes in the electrical-conduction system (arrhythmia, etc.) or congenital defects, although the most common cause is an alteration in blood circulation in the arteries that feed the heart (the coronary arteries).

► RISK FACTORS



There is a series of factors that can increase the chances of developing diseases in the circulatory system. These are known as **CARDIOVASCULAR RISK FACTORS**. Some of them, such as **age**, **gender** and **family history**, cannot be changed. However, others can, such as **obesity**, a **sedentary lifestyle**, **arterial hypertension**, **diabetes**, **smoking** and **drinking habits** and **excessive fat intake**, in addition to psychological factors such as **stress**, **anxiety**, **depression** and **anger**.

Controlling the risk factors that have caused your heart disease will help you control the

► SEXUAL ACTIVITY

Sexual relations can be resumed from 2 to 4 weeks after your release from hospital, as long as you do not experience any adverse symptoms. It is recommended that you resume sexual activity slowly, to allow your heart to better adapt. You should never engage in sexual activity after eating, exerting yourself physically or experiencing strong emotions, and you should refrain from sexual activity for at least 3 hours in such cases. If you experience chest pain during sexual activity, stop immediately and follow the advice given for treating angina.

Medication such as Viagra®, Levitra®, Cialis® etc., may only be taken if prescribed by your cardiologist.

► PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regular physical activity helps control the risk factors and improves quality of life. However, it is important to walk at a pace that allows you to talk without difficulty. You should never run. Start gradually and build up to one hour of physical activity per day, five days per week. Avoid gradients during the first few days, wear comfortable clothing and drink liquids to prevent dehydration. Other activities such as cycling and swimming are also recommended.

Always avoid violent or competitive exercise, lifting or pulling excessive weights, exposing yourself to extreme temperatures and walking after eating or when experiencing sensations of dizziness, pain or tiredness.



► RETURNING TO WORK AND NORMAL DAILY LIFE

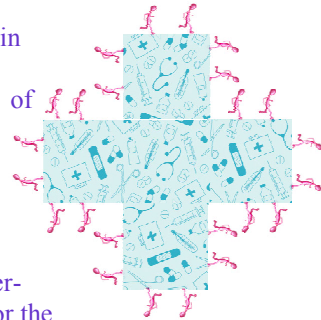
Returning to normal daily life must be done gradually and under medical supervision. You must listen to your heart and identify signs such as dizziness, fatigue and discomfort upon exertion. But remember that **YOU ARE NOT AN INVALID** and can return to work after two months, depending on the nature and evolution of your heart disease.

Driving vehicles

You will be able to drive private or commercial vehicles in accordance with the timeframes established for each cardiovascular pathology by the Directorate General of Traffic. If you have any doubts regarding long journeys, consult your healthcare team.

Further advice

- Always take your medication
- Always carry a copy of your medical report with you
- If you have a pacemaker or an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD), always carry the identification card for the device with you and avoid exposure to electromagnetic fields
- If you have to undergo any surgical procedures, including visiting the dentist, carry a copy of your medical report with you, especially if you have an artificial heart valve or other device or are taking anticoagulants or antiplatelets



► EATING HABITS

Eating habits are fundamental to controlling risk factors. It is recommended that you follow a typical Mediterranean diet:

- Avoid large meals. Eat 4 to 5 small meals per day
- Consume very little salt, especially if you suffer from hypertension or heart failure. Season your food with herbs or spices
- Eat white fish and oily fish 3 or 4 times per week
- Eat chicken, turkey or rabbit 3 to 4 times per week and pork once or twice per week
- Eat fruit and vegetables every day and legumes twice per week
- Eat rice, pasta, potatoes and/or bread every day, or once per week if you suffer from diabetes or obesity
- Eat/drink 2 or 3 servings of dairy products (milk, yogurt, cheese, etc.) per day. Always choose the skimmed variety
- Dried fruits and nuts are heart-healthy but very high in calories and salt
- Avoid cured meats, offal, commercially produced baked goods and salty snacks



If you suffer from diabetes and/or you are overweight, you must moderate your portion size and calorie intake. Weigh yourself and measure your waist regularly..