



## HOME EXERCISE GUIDELINES

- Remember that it may take several months before you feel “recovered” after heart surgery. You should gradually feel an increase in strength and energy levels.
- If you are diabetic and taking insulin, do not exercise on an empty stomach. Instead, exercise one to two hours after eating.
- When weather does not permit outdoor walking, walk in an enclosed mall, school gym, indoor track or large store. You may use a treadmill at home, but this is recommended only on a very low speed and without incline.
- Begin your walking program the following day after you go home.
- There is no reason to avoid stairs as long as you remember to go slowly.
- When you exercise, remember to start slowly and progressively increase your distance/time by one block (1/10 mile) or 1-2 minutes each day, if you do not have any unusual symptoms. Continue with this progression until you have reached 30-60 minutes.
- Always cool down slowly and stretch well after activity.
- Your general energy level is another good pacing signal. It is normal, with exercise, to feel somewhat tired after finishing. A rest period of up to one hour should restore your energy level. It is important that you pace your activities throughout the day.

### Signs and Symptoms of Overexertion

- Increased shortness of breath
- Headache, nausea or vomiting after exercise
- Feeling of excessive fatigue (Recovery time greater than or equal to one hour).
- If you develop any of the following symptoms during exercise, stop and consult with your doctor:
  - Pain in your chest, arms, shoulders, back, neck, jaw, teeth, ears, or throat
  - Excessive sweating, cold sweats, unusual shortness of breath
  - Any new or increased irregularity of your pulse, or “skipped heart beats”
  - Any extreme fatigue
  - Any lightheadedness or dizziness
  - Any persistent nausea or vomiting especially if it is associated with the above symptoms

A regular exercise program decreases your risk of heart disease and/or the progression of the disease process. If you have any questions regarding your exercise program, contact your cardiac rehabilitation nurse at (406)-657-4310 or 1-800-252-1246.