Our mission at Home Care Assistance is to change the way the world ages. We provide older adults with quality care that enables them to live happier, healthier lives at home. Our services are distinguished by the caliber of our caregivers, the responsiveness of our staff and our expertise in Live-In care. We embrace a positive, balanced approach to aging centered on the evolving needs of older adults.

- **Live-In Experts.** We specialize in around the clock care to help seniors live well at home.
- **Available 24/7.** Care managers are on call for clients and their families, even during nights and weekends.
- **High Caliber Caregivers.** We hire only 1 in 25 applicants and provide ongoing training and supervision.
- **Balanced Care.** Our unique approach to care promotes healthy mind, body and spirit.
- **No Long Term Contracts.** Use our services only as long as you’re 100% satisfied.
- **A Trusted Partner.** We’re honored to be Preferred Providers for professionals in both the medical and senior communities.
- **Peace of Mind.** Independent industry surveys place our client satisfaction rate at 97%.

This guide is brought to you by Home Care Assistance, the leading experts in post-hospitalization care. Visit www.HospitaltoHomeCare.com and www.HomeCareAssistance.com to learn more about our services and find resources for your post-hospitalization needs.

Planning for an effective recovery at home following Congestive Heart Failure, Heart Attack or other Cardiovascular condition

www.HomeCareAssistance.com
Undergoing cardiac surgery or managing a chronic cardiovascular condition can be a trying experience. A cardiovascular condition weakens your entire body and forces you to adapt to a new lifestyle and routine. Cardiac rehabilitation benefits individuals who have a chronic cardiovascular condition as well as those who have had a recent cardiac event such as a heart attack, heart failure or a procedure such as angioplasty or heart surgery. The cardiac rehabilitation process can be difficult, but it is critical in helping you resume normal activities and enjoy a high quality of life. The following tips are designed to help patients and their families safely navigate the rehabilitation process at home and prevent avoidable readmission to the hospital.

Consider your living environment.

Recovering from a cardiac condition or event can reduce your energy level and cause fatigue, so consider setting up a temporary living space on the first floor of your home or in a central location with easy access to the bathroom and kitchen. This will enable you to avoid using stairwells, which can cause pain and exhaustion. While this living arrangement may not be ideal, it is a temporary precaution that can facilitate your recovery.

Keep an eye on the scale.

Cardiac rehabilitation patients are advised to pay close attention to changes in their body weight. One useful practice is to check and record your weight every day and monitor any fluctuations. Your doctor will give you a safe weight range typically five pounds in either direction of your current status. Depending on your diuretics dosage, you may notice regular fluctuations in your weight. If, however, you notice your weight changing more rapidly than expected or beyond your range, notify your physician immediately or visit the Emergency Room.

Manage your medications.

Cardiac rehabilitation patients will generally be prescribed a number of prescription medications, including diuretics to help reduce the amount of fluid retained in the body. Because diuretics, in particular, flush out your system through the urinary tract, your first few weeks on the medication may be uncomfortable. You might find yourself visiting the bathroom more often than usual and you will need to adjust your schedule accordingly. One tip to best manage your diuretic dosages is to take your prescribed medications in the morning. While this will cause more frequent trips to the bathroom during the daylight hours, it will allow you to sleep through the night without frequent bathroom breaks.

Commit to your nutrition and lifestyle modifications.

Though it can be tempting to return to your normal diet, some foods are no longer appropriate given your rehabilitation plan. For instance, certain foods such as ice cream and Jell-O may be off limits for your fluid restriction diet. In addition, your physician will typically recommend lifestyle modifications centered on healthy nutrition, smoking cessation, blood pressure management and regular exercise and physical therapy. It is important to follow the doctor’s recommendations to prevent complications with your heart condition. Regular exercise and physical therapy help your body and heart rebuild strength and battle fatigue. A balanced diet low in cholesterol, fat and sodium prevents unnecessary additional stress on your heart. Home Care Assistance caregivers are trained in the Balanced Care Method™ and can help you commit to healthy nutrition and regular physical activity.

Ask for help.

When you are recovering from a cardiac event or managing a chronic condition, physical weakness or low energy levels may prevent you from taking on activities of daily living. Do not hesitate to ask for help from a family member or a home care provider. Especially in the initial weeks following discharge, you should expect some level of physical dependence for activities of daily living and household tasks. A Home Care Assistance caregiver can provide support with personal activities including bathing, dressing, grooming, mobility and eating, as well as household activities, meal preparation and transportation. If, in addition to physical weakness, you find that you are struggling with breathing difficulty or shortness of breath, your heart may be struggling due to a high level of retained fluids – contact your doctor or visit the Emergency Room.

Consult your Cardiologist.

As you progress in your recovery, it’s important to check in with your cardiologist on a regular basis. Typically, your cardiologist will recommend one visit every three months, though this will vary depending on your specific situation. Though it may be inconvenient, it’s very important that you keep your regular appointments. When you visit, make sure to take advantage of the physician’s insight into your condition and care needs. Write down questions prior to your appointment and go in with a list of any concerns and questions you may have. After your visit, make sure you communicate any recommendations to your family and your caregivers.

Actively Planning for Discharge and Post-Hospitalization Recovery Can Smooth the Transition Home

1. Prior to Discharge
   - Speak with your discharge planner as early as possible about choices for rehabilitation. Weigh the benefits of a facility versus recovery at home.

   Make sure to consider your own comfort, the comfort of your loved ones, your financial situation, and your physical and emotional needs.
   - Honestly assess your abilities and identify areas in which you might need support. Consider activities of daily living such as mobility, grooming and dressing, household activities such as meal preparation and transportation, and companionship needs.
   - Talk to your family and friends about the level of assistance they can provide. While your family may be able to provide some care during your recovery, patients with more comprehensive or full-time needs should look to a home care provider for additional support.
   - If you think you would benefit from a caregiver, contact a reputable home care provider. Home Care Assistance has a Transition Home ™ Package designed specifically for the unique needs of post-hospitalization patients. It offers a personalized discharge and care plan, flexible schedules to accommodate changing needs, caregivers specifically matched to the patient and ongoing care management.

2. Recovering at Home
   - Set goals and track your progress. Although incremental improvements may seem insignificant, they are actually critical steps on the path to recovery.
   - Establish a routine, develop and maintain a regular schedule of meals, medication times, exercise and rest. Setting a routine for basic activities can help you acclimate to life at home.
   - Ease into your post-hospitalization routine by allowing your caregiver to take on household responsibilities. Especially in your first weeks at home, your energy is limited and should be reserved for your recovery.
   - Identify and manage stress when it occurs. It is common to feel agitated or frustrated when you first transition home, especially if you are less independent than you are accustomed to. Acknowledge and manage stress when it occurs and recognize any emotional challenges that could lead to depression.
   - If you are receiving home care, the provider should participate in developing your plan of care, managing your routine and providing an outlet for stress.