



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Rehab for the Heart

Use of Outpatient Cardiac Rehabilitation Among Heart Attack Survivors – 20 U.S. States and the District of Columbia, 2013 and Four U.S. States, 2015

Recorded: August 22, 2017; posted: August 24, 2017

[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Kathleen Dooling] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Kathleen Dooling.

Each year, nearly 790,000 adults in the U.S. suffer a heart attack. For a third of these, it's not their first. Cardiac rehabilitation could have prevented many of these.

Dr. Fleetwood Loustalot is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. He's joining us today to discuss the importance of getting cardiac rehab after a heart attack. Welcome to the show, Fleetwood.

[Dr. Loustalot] Thanks for having me, Kathleen.

[Dr. Dooling] Fleetwood, how many people receive cardiac rehabilitation after suffering a heart attack?

[Dr. Loustalot] Not nearly as many as recommended. Our data and other studies have shown that only one in three of those recommended for cardiac rehab receive it. And there are disparities. For example, more males than females receive cardiac rehab and participation rates vary among states.

[Dr. Dooling] Why do so few people take advantage of rehab?

[Dr. Loustalot] It's likely a combination of things, Kathleen. Barriers exist for patients and in the health care system. For patients, one problem could be awareness. There is just not a good understanding in the general public of how beneficial cardiac rehab can be in preventing another heart attack. This may cause some patients not to prioritize or participate in cardiac rehab. However, there may be health care system barriers, such as access to a cardiac rehab program. Not all communities have a program, so alternatives, such as a remote or home-based program may be needed. The ideal scenario, in either case, would be a smooth transition from a hospital referral to program enrollment to program completion, which may be up to 36 sessions.

[Dr. Dooling] What's involved in rehabilitation?

[Dr. Loustalot] It's a jumpstart. Having a heart attack or having a heart procedure can be stressful, maybe even the most stressful time in an individual's life. I know this from personal experience with my family. And educating patients after this time can be difficult but it is so important. Cardiac rehab is the start of a new journey. It generally includes a team of individuals, covering priority areas for recovery, including prescribe and supervise exercise; education, such as how to stop smoking, how to better manage or lose weight, how to better control risk factors,

such as diabetes, how to improve your diet; and stress management. Sessions are generally two to three times a week and may be at a cardiac rehab center or potentially in your home or some other facility, depending on where you live.

[Dr. Dooling] How effective is rehabilitation?

[Dr. Loustalot] Research shows that cardiac rehab significantly reduces the risk of death and future heart attacks. There is also a dose-response relationship, meaning the more sessions attended, the better the outcomes. It also seeks to improve control of risk factors, such as high blood pressure, and it targets improvement in physical functioning and quality of life. Many components of cardiac rehab work together to reduce the risk for future heart attacks.

[Dr. Dooling] Is cardiac rehab only for people who've suffered a heart attack?

[Dr. Loustalot] No. Others are eligible and research has shown cardiac rehab to be beneficial for those who have had a heart procedure, such as a bypass or catheterization, and among those with peripheral arterial disease, angina (or chest pain), and heart failure. Having a regular health care provider and being aware of the benefits of cardiac rehab are key.

[Dr. Dooling] Where can listeners get more information about cardiac rehab?

[Dr. Loustalot] Listeners can go to cdc.gov/heartdisease.

[Dr. Dooling] Thanks, Fleetwood. I've been talking today with Dr. Fleetwood Loustalot about the importance of getting cardiac rehab after a heart attack.

Rehab can reduce a person's chances of dying from a heart attack by more than half. If you or someone you know has had a heart attack, talk with your health care professional about getting help and advice to prevent another one.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Kathleen Dooling for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.