

Support

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Recovery from Heart Surgery: The First Few Weeks

During the first few weeks after heart surgery, you'll be regaining your energy and strength. Your doctor will let you know what you can and can't do as you get better. Take things slowly and rest when you get tired.

Walking

Walking is one of the easiest and best ways to help yourself get better. When you walk, your legs pump blood to your heart, improving blood flow throughout your body. Choose a safe place with a level surface. A local park or a mall are good choices. Begin by walking for 5 minutes. Walk a little longer each day.

Driving

Your reflexes will be slow for a while. Also, some of your medications can make you drowsy. Let others drive until your surgeon says you can begin driving again. When you are in a car, wear your seat belt.

Lifting

For the first 4 weeks, don't lift more than 10 pounds.

Showering

You may feel weak the first few times you shower at home. Ask someone to stand nearby in case you need help. Avoid using very hot water. It can affect your blood flow and make you dizzy.

Working

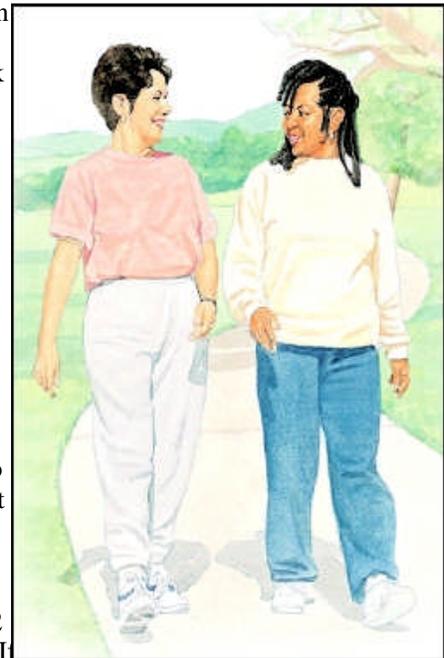
Your doctor can advise you about the best plan for returning to work. In 1–2 weeks after your surgery, you may be able to return part-time to a desk job. If you need to wait longer.

Making Love

Unless your doctor tells you otherwise, you can resume having sex as soon as you feel comfortable.

Your Feelings

It's common to feel a little depressed or frustrated while healing after major surgery. You might feel cheerful and energetic one day, then cranky and tired the next. You may find it hard to concentrate or to sleep. Or you may not be hungry. These things will get better soon. Don't withdraw from your family and friends. Keep talking, listening, and supporting each other.



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