

Heart, Health & Breath – Wellness Program

Welcome to the Heart, Health & Breath – Wellness Program. This handout has been prepared to help you understand how the program works and answer commonly asked questions.

What is the Heart, Health & Breath - Wellness Program?

The Heart, Health & Breath – Wellness Program is a physician referred and health professional supervised community exercise and lifestyle change program, developed in partnership with the Comox Community Centre. Its aim is to support clients with heart disease, lung disease or other chronic medical conditions to exercise safely, improve quality of life, and live healthier lives. The program runs for ten weeks, for 14 classes. Classes are on Saturdays from 11:00am – 1:00pm (10 total) and Tuesdays 12:00 – 1:00pm (Education only - 4 total).

The program cost is \$399. A subsidy program is available to clients on low income, and payment plans are available. The program currently runs twice a year (September – December and January – March).

The Heart, Health & Breath – Wellness Program Includes the following:

- Referral by your physician or specialist
- Individual Intake Interview
- Group Education and Discussion including exercise, blood pressure, stress management, nutrition and functional training. Guest speakers include a Registered Dietician and a Pharmacist.
- Supervised Group Exercise Sessions

Intake Interview Session:

When you join the Heart, Health & Breath - Wellness Program you will have an intake interview that lasts 30-60 minutes. During the interview, staff will ask questions about your health and there will be some forms to fill out. Wear comfortable clothing and supportive close toed walking shoes. Bring a list of your medications, as well as bring your nitro, puffers and glucometer if you have them.

Supervised Group Education and Exercise Sessions:

Group sessions are usually 2 hours. This includes one hour of education and discussion regarding nutrition, exercise and activity, managing your condition, and stress and coping. The exercise component is also one hour, but you may not be exercising for that whole time. We will do a seated or standing group cool down, balance and mobility, aerobic or cardiovascular exercise, strengthening and flexibility, whatever is appropriate for your condition and goals. You will start slowly and gradually, increasing your exercise time as you progress through the program. During the group sessions, everyone exercises at their own pace. Your oxygen saturation, blood pressure, symptoms and heart rate will be monitored. Your exercise level will be adjusted to meet your needs and to how you feel before, during, and after exercise.

Tips to Get the Most from Group Exercise Sessions:

- Come on time.
- Remember that you will need to take five minutes to sit and relax before taking your resting heart rate and blood pressure.
- Please do not begin exercising before the formal session start time because the program deliverer will not be available.

- When the exercise session is over you will take your heart rate and blood pressure again. The program deliverer will assist you with this in the early stages. This is important to assess how your heart is responding to exercise. Please stay until this has been completed.
- If you need to leave early please let the staff know.

How Do I Exercise Safely

- Tell staff right away if you feel unwell or experience unusual sensations, before, during, or after exercise.
- Take your medications at the usual time as prescribed by your Doctor.
- Let staff know if there are changes to your health or medications.
- Carry your nitro spray and/or Ventolin with you for every session.
- Bring a glucometer, quick sugar and snack if you have diabetes.

What Do I Wear to Exercise Class?

- Wear loose fitting, comfortable, absorbent clothing. Supportive, closed heel and toe shoes are required for safe exercising.
- You need socks to absorb moisture and protect your feet from blisters.
- Bring a water bottle and towel.
- Please do not bring valuables or leave valuables locked in your car or a locker.

Should I Eat Before Exercise Class?

Avoid eating a heavy meal two hours before exercise. To prevent low blood sugar eat a light snack 1 hour before you exercise. If you have diabetes always, carry a snack and a glucometer with you to exercise class.

Should I Come to Class If I'm Sick?

When you are ill, your body needs rest and time to recover. Stay home and return to the program when you are feeling better.

Refund policy: Pro-rated refunds (including a 25% admin. fee) will only be issued for medical reasons.

Congratulations on your decision to take an active role in improving your health by joining the Heart, Health & Breath – Wellness Program!

For more information, please call the Comox Recreation Centre at 250 339 2255