

# Post-treatment Pathway and Milestones

After treatment, it is important to think positively and to feel as good as you can.

To do this, you should think of your recovery as a positive journey that you are taking to improve your life and health!

Studies have shown that some patients may struggle with depression or low moods following treatment, and this can slow down recovery.

Use the milestones on the right to help structure your recovery pathway and remind you of the small achievements you make each day.

Don't worry about depression; do what you can to prevent it, talk to your family and friends and tell your doctor if you notice symptoms or feel that you are struggling.

Record your progress. It will help you to take stock and to notice the good things that are happening.



The more we listen, the more lives we save

Don't worry about reaching the milestones on time. Everyone has a different recovery experience.

## DAY 1-2

You may feel tired and confused, especially if you are attached to unfamiliar IVs and machines, but do your best to follow post-op instructions – each one is a step toward your full recovery. If you're unsure of anything, talk to the medical staff as they will be able to assist you.

Enjoy your progress even if you're just moving from lying down to sitting up.

Even if it hurts, celebrate those first steps - just walking to the bathroom is an important part of moving forward.

Think about:

My moment of achievement on my first day:

.....

.....

I am thankful for:

.....

## DAY 3-5

Follow the advice of the hospital staff be remember to be gentle with yourself. Many activities might be a bit awkward. During this phase, you may be able to shower, get dressed, remove machines and IVs.

These small moments are individual steps toward feeling more like yourself again.

By the end of day three, you will likely be able to plan to do some enjoyable activities in the coming days:

- Choose some films you'll enjoy
- Read a good book
- Invite some friends to come for a visit
- Play a board game with your family or friends

Positive thoughts:

.....

Enjoyable moments:

.....

## DAY 6-12

You will likely notice significant progress during this time. Sutures may be removed and mobility will be encouraged. This is an important time to be gentle with yourself, remembering you're still recovering. It can be easy to focus on how you're not better yet, but you'll do yourself a favour if you try your best to be positive and to focus on how you're improving at a nice pace that suits you.

At this point in the recovery process some people experience post-surgery blues so take care of your emotional journey toward recovery. Allow yourself to enjoy your progress as much as you can.

Ask yourself:

What improvements are you noticing?

What things are getting easier?

What have you been able to enjoy about your recovery?

## WEEKS 2-3

Setting some small, achievable goals for yourself will be important at this stage.

Some people expect to feel recovered by this time, but full recovery will take a while. You will still need plenty of rest, but you'll also want to gradually ease back into a more active life. Plan some very gentle activities you enjoy, or start going on very short strolls.

Many people find routine to be an important part of a positive recovery and by the end of week three; you may be able to start easing back into a predictable schedule.

- Plan gentle outings with friends
- Walk around the block or to the local high street if you've been cleared for exercise
- Enjoy a meal out with your partner, family or friends
- Begin to look forward to cardiac rehab

### Think Forward

Plan something positive for the coming weeks

I am excited for:.....

While you're going to rehabilitation sessions, be sure to ask questions, take notes of what the nurse or healthcare professionals say and utilise their wisdom! The sessions can often be full of useful information, so making notes will help when you're repeating exercises at home. You could even encourage your family to join in with some of the tasks!

Ultimately, this experience will enrich your physical health, so it is important to take care of your mental wellbeing too.