

# Embracing Life After a Heart Attack



Certified Exercise Specialist Colleen Geary BS, CES<sub>ACSM</sub> speaks with Ken during one of his cardiac rehabilitation sessions.

Ken survived a severe heart attack. When he experienced chest pain that didn't subside, his wife, Ruth, felt it best to bring him to Holy Family's Emergency Room. "We have been associated with Holy Family for many years and my husband and I have always chosen it for our family when the need arises."

"Fortunately, I was at the hospital during the heart attack," said Ken. "Everything the doctors and caregivers did that day and over the following days saved my life. They are miracle makers."

The team responded quickly, with clarity and experience. "This was quite a shock for us," explained Ruth. "Dr. Mustali Dohadwala quickly arranged for Ken to have a catheterization with cardiologist Dr. David Gossman who, despite how quickly all of this was unfolding, took the time to explain what was happening to our family. We felt informed and very reassured."

Ken felt immediate relief from the stent in his right coronary artery. That night and over the following days his cardiologist Dr. Sunit Mukherjee visited and explained that a second vessel on the left was partially occluded. Another cardiac catheterization was scheduled.

One could say that this second procedure saved his life, again. In addition to the left vessel occlusion,

another blockage was compromising the right stent. Dr. Mukherjee reopened the artery, preventing what could have possibly caused a second heart attack.

"All of the physicians and staff, especially the nurses, in the cardiac catheterization lab, intensive care unit, critical care unit and the recovery unit were wonderful. They advocated for him and comforted our family," said Ruth. "We are so grateful to God for his recovery and for the wonderful people that he placed around Ken during his stay at Holy Family. Life has a new and special meaning, and Holy Family Hospital was a part of that."

Today, Ken is enjoying a new life full of heart healthy habits. Most importantly, he's savoring every moment with his wife and family.



Holy Family Hospital's Cardiac Rehabilitation Program opened almost 30 years ago, in 1984. Since 2005, our highly skilled staff and patient-centered approach have earned the distinction of program certification by the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation (AACVPR). This voluntary certification is awarded every three years after a rigorous evaluation of the team which includes cardiovascular nurses, exercise physiologists, a registered dietitian, licensed social worker and Board Certified cardiologist Dr. Anthony Marino, MD, FACC, who serves as the Medical Director.

## Ken Turns to Cardiac Rehabilitation for Recovery

Ken feels better than he can ever remember. He's embraced the Cardiac Rehab program and his future. "Overcoming this has motivated me to adopt a healthy lifestyle," said Ken. "I can walk up stairs without getting winded or tired. I am eating healthy. I feel strong. I'm really enjoying life."

The hospital's Cardiac Rehabilitation program is managed by Stephanie DiCenso, MS, RCEP<sub>ACSM</sub> CES<sub>ACSM</sub>, a registered Clinical Exercise Physiologist. "Ken is a model patient. Everything he is doing for himself exemplifies the benefits a cardiac rehabilitation program can have on someone's overall health and well-being. He understands and appreciates the importance of exercise and healthy nutrition to extend his quality of life and decrease his risk for future cardiac events."

### Why Consider Cardiac Rehabilitation?

Cardiac rehabilitation is a comprehensive exercise, education and behavior modification program designed to improve the physical and emotional condition of patients with heart disease.

Cardiac rehabilitation typically begins four to six weeks following a cardiac event, and may continue for up to three months, depending upon individual needs and goals. Sessions, offered three times per week, provide supervised exercise, education and social support.

#### You can benefit from cardiac rehabilitation if you have had:

- Heart disease such as angina or a heart attack
- Coronary bypass surgery or a balloon catheter procedure with stent inserted in your heart artery
- Heart valve surgery
- Heart transplant or heart failure
- Or if you have multiple risk factors for heart disease

#### Cardiac rehabilitation is a safe and effective way to help you:

- Feel better faster
- Become stronger and increase stamina
- Return to the physical activities you enjoy
- Reduce stress
- Reduce the risk of future heart problems
- Live longer

At Holy Family Hospital, the Cardiac Rehabilitation Program is certified by the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation (AACVPR) and offers a multidisciplinary approach to exercise training and lifestyle change. Holy Family's cardiac rehab team will work with you to conduct a comprehensive evaluation and develop a custom education and treatment plan including a cardiac risk profile, exercise training, heart health and nutrition education, and stress management.

"This stage of recovery is about positive change and establishing healthy habits," said Stephanie. "We build a relationship with every individual as we take this journey with them. It is truly a privilege to impact someone's life so significantly."

To learn more, call 978-687-0156, ext. 2385 or visit [steward.org/Cardiac-and-Vascular](http://steward.org/Cardiac-and-Vascular). Early morning and evening hours are available for your convenience. Cardiac rehabilitation is covered by most insurance plans with a referral.