



Press Release
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Healing After a Heart Event Starts with Support and a Plan

Cardiac Rehabilitation Helps Patients Rebuild Strength and Confidence

KNOX CITY, Texas (February 12, 2026) — A heart attack or cardiac procedure can be a life-changing experience, often leaving patients and families with questions about what recovery should look like in the weeks that follow. While medical treatment addresses the immediate emergency, healing does not stop when a patient leaves the hospital. Cardiac rehabilitation plays a vital role in helping individuals safely regain strength, confidence, and long-term heart health.

During February’s American Heart Month, Knox County Hospital District is highlighting the importance of cardiac rehabilitation as a key part of recovery for patients who have recently experienced a heart attack or undergone a cardiac procedure. Cardiac rehab is a structured, medically supervised program designed to support patients as they work toward restoring physical function and reducing the risk of future heart problems.

“After a cardiac event, patients are often eager to return to their normal routines, but it’s important to do so safely,” said Calder Cude, Cardiac Rehab Director. “Cardiac rehabilitation provides a guided path forward, helping patients rebuild strength while closely monitoring their heart health.”

Cardiac rehabilitation typically begins one to two weeks after a heart attack or cardiac procedure, once a patient has been medically cleared by their healthcare provider. Programs are individualized based on each patient’s condition, medical history, and recovery goals. Most cardiac rehab programs last several weeks and include supervised exercise, education, and lifestyle support.

Exercise is a core component of cardiac rehab, but it is carefully designed and monitored. Patients participate in physical activity that gradually increases in intensity under the supervision of trained medical professionals. This approach allows patients to improve cardiovascular endurance and muscle strength while minimizing risk.

Beyond physical conditioning, cardiac rehab also focuses on education and long-term lifestyle habits. Patients learn about heart-healthy nutrition, stress management, medication adherence, and ways to manage conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and obesity — all factors that can contribute to heart disease.

“Recovery isn’t just about physical healing,” Cude said. “It’s also about giving patients the knowledge and confidence they need to take care of their heart long after rehab ends.”

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Studies have shown that patients who participate in cardiac rehabilitation are less likely to experience future cardiac events and have better overall outcomes. Cardiac rehab has also been associated with lower hospital readmission rates and improved quality of life.

Heart disease remains one of the leading causes of death in the United States, yet many people survive their first heart attack. For those individuals, the period following a cardiac event is a critical window for making changes that can positively affect long-term health.

“Cardiac rehab helps patients turn a frightening experience into an opportunity for meaningful change,” Cude said. “It gives them structure, support, and reassurance during a time that can feel overwhelming.”

Medicare and most private insurance plans cover all or part of cardiac rehabilitation for patients who qualify, including those who have experienced a heart attack, heart failure, or cardiac surgery. Participation requires a referral from a primary care provider or cardiologist.

Knox County Hospital District encourages patients who have recently experienced a heart attack or cardiac procedure to talk with their healthcare provider about whether cardiac rehab at Knox County Hospital District is right for them. Early conversations can help ensure patients receive appropriate follow-up care and support during recovery.

While American Heart Month serves as a reminder to focus on heart health, providers emphasize that recovery and prevention are year-round priorities. Establishing healthy habits, attending follow-up appointments, and participating in recommended rehabilitation programs can make a lasting difference.

“Heart Month helps start the conversation,” Cude said. “But ongoing care and support are what truly help patients move forward with confidence.”

To learn more about cardiac rehabilitation services or to schedule an appointment with a healthcare provider, call Knox County Hospital at 940-657-3535 the Knox City Clinic at 940-657-3906 or the Munday Clinic at 940-422-5271.

About Knox County Hospital District

Founded in 1926, Knox County Hospital District provides healthcare for residents of Knox County and surrounding areas. The district offers a wealth of medical services, including 24-hour emergency care, advanced radiology services, a clinical laboratory, home health, physical therapy, long-term care, patient education, and more. For additional information, please call 940-657-3535 or visit www.knoxhospital.org.

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