

Rehabilitation

What it is and what to expect

What is rehabilitation?

Rehabilitation (or ‘rehab’) is the process of improving your health and quality of life after injury, illness or surgery.

This brochure provides some information about rehabilitation, including who might be involved, where you might receive care, and what to expect.

Medical, nursing and allied health services are offered to assist you with:

- ✓ physical function
- ✓ mental function
- ✓ emotional and spiritual health
- ✓ social wellbeing.

Your rehab journey

Rehabilitation focuses on you as a whole person, and is specifically tailored to your own goals.

Your rehab team will work with you to break down your long-term goals into short-term goals so that you are able to see progress.

It is not always possible to have a complete recovery, but rehabilitation supports you to adjust to the changes you have experienced. Rehab is often a lifelong journey.

You may focus on activities that matter most to you, such as being able to:

- ✓ prepare meals
- ✓ go to the local shopping centre or cinema
- ✓ play with your children or grandchildren
- ✓ return to work
- ✓ return to your studies
- ✓ return to sport and leisure activities.

The rehabilitation team

Your rehabilitation team will involve a variety of health professionals from different disciplines. This is referred to as a multidisciplinary team (MDT).

MEDICAL AND NURSING PROFESSIONALS

Doctor	Manages your day-to-day care while you are in hospital
Rehabilitation nurses	Work with medical and allied health staff to create comprehensive care plans based on your goals and potential, to help restore your health beyond hospital
Rehabilitation physician	Provides medical supervision, assessing and diagnosing your condition to maximise recovery potential
Ward nurses	Provide 24/7 care to assist you with the ongoing management of your condition while you are in hospital

ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Allied health assistant	Supports specialist allied health professionals
Dietitian	Monitors your nutrition needs and food/fluid intake to aid your recovery
Diversional therapist	Assists you with leisure and recreational experiences important to you
Exercise physiologist	Assists you to improve your strength, balance, mobility and endurance
Neuro-psychologist	Assesses and supports you with changes in thinking or behaviour
Occupational therapist	Assists you to manage daily activities and look after yourself
Orthoptist	Assesses and assists the use of best visual function
Orthotist/prosthetist	Provides assistive devices if required (e.g. prosthetic limb)
Pharmacist	Prepares and dispenses medication, provides education and advice about prescriptions
Physiotherapist	Assists you to achieve your physical potential by focusing on your function and tailoring a treatment program specific to your needs
Podiatrist	Diagnoses and treats feet and lower limb conditions to assist mobility and recovery
Psychologist	Supports your mental health, including adjusting to your condition and dealing with grief, stress and mood changes
Social worker	Supports you and your family and carers in leaving hospital or rehab facility (discharge planning) and connects you to relevant services
Speech pathologist	Assists you with communication and eating/drinking (swallowing)

The rehabilitation settings

Rehabilitation care occurs in hospital and community settings. The location/s that you receive care will depend on your needs and what is available in your local area.

CARE	LOCATION	DETAIL
Inpatient care	Hospital	The word 'inpatient' refers to the time you spend in hospital, from the time of admission. Care is provided by the MDT.
Outpatient / ambulatory care	Hospital, outpatient clinic, community health centre	You will receive treatment from an allied health therapist, either on an individual basis (one-on-one) or in a group setting. You may also be reviewed by medical or nursing staff. This type of care setting is most common when you require only a single type of therapy, e.g. physiotherapy.
Day hospital care	Hospital, outpatient clinic, community health centre	You will receive treatment from the MDT, either on an individual basis (one-on-one) or in a group setting. You may also be reviewed by medical or nursing staff. This is usually the care setting when you require two or more types of therapy.
Home-based care	Your residence	After you leave hospital (discharged), this care can be delivered by allied health or nursing staff within the home environment.



Playing your part

Your role is the most important one in the rehab team – personal involvement and commitment are important in rehabilitation.

The MDT members work together to provide care and support, meeting regularly to discuss your progress. You will be involved in conversations about your care, including setting personal goals. If you want, your family members can also be involved.

Rehabilitation focuses on 'doing with you' rather than 'doing for you'. You will be encouraged to do as much as possible for yourself (such as getting ready for the day, dressing and feeding yourself, etc).

You can support your own recovery by:

- ✓ working with your rehab team to identify what you want to achieve and to set your goals
- ✓ participating willingly (attending your scheduled therapy appointments)
- ✓ putting in effort and taking part to the best of your ability
- ✓ practicing - your therapists will instruct you to do exercises in your own time. Make sure to seek advice so you don't get tired or injure yourself.

If you consent, your family and carers are welcome to be involved. They may be encouraged to supervise your rehab program, practice exercises with you and provide support. Their involvement and support may help your recovery.

Goal setting

Goal setting is essential in rehabilitation.

Your rehab team will work with you to develop personal goals, ensuring they are:

- ✓ specific (e.g. 'be able to dress myself', rather than 'get better')
- ✓ realistic
- ✓ achievable (initial small or short-term goals can be stepping stones to achieve a bigger long-term goal)
- ✓ time-based (e.g. within 2 days, next week)

Together with your rehab team, your goals should be regularly reviewed with you at set points in time. This is an important way to track your progress. Your goals may need to be adjusted over time, depending on your recovery.

As part of the rehab process, it is important to share your progress with your family and team and celebrate your achievements along the way.

What to expect from inpatient rehab

Admission

On admission to the inpatient rehab, you will be assessed by the MDT and provided with therapy and care tailored to your needs.

Weekly team meetings called 'case-conference' are usually held to discuss your progress, future goals and plans for your discharge. Information from this meeting should be provided to you and your family by the rehab team members.

Most inpatient rehab have dining rooms where you can eat your meals. Depending on the size and your needs, family and friends may join you in the dining room.

What to bring

It is important to bring a positive attitude and the willingness to achieve your goals.

If you are an inpatient and staying overnight, items that you should bring include:

- ✓ toiletries – toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, shaving supplies, brush, comb
- ✓ essential aids – glasses, hearing aids, dentures, mobility aids
- ✓ clothing – at least two days of appropriate clothing for taking part in your rehabilitation program, as well as pyjamas for sleeping
- ✓ shoes – these need to be well fitted, safe and comfortable

You may also bring photos and personal items, but it is not recommended that you bring anything too valuable.

Mobile phones and laptops / tablets should be locked away when you are not using them.

Leaving hospital (discharge)

We recognise that being at home is preferred for your recovery, so the rehab team will aim to get you home as soon as possible, depending on your circumstances. Talk to your rehab team about any concerns or wishes you have regarding going home.

Sometimes there are changes in your planned discharge date, due to:

- ✓ unforeseen illness
- ✓ equipment or home modification requirements
- ✓ availability of required community services
- ✓ not participating in your rehab program
- ✓ making quicker progress than expected.

Referrals for ongoing therapy and/or community services will be organised by the rehab team prior to your discharge if this is required.

Support and information

Whether you are recovering from an injury, illness or surgery, or you are living with a long-term medical condition, you may have concerns about the future.

The health professionals involved in the MDT understand that rehabilitation can be challenging. Sometimes there are setbacks or you may be faced with uncertainty, this can be very distressing.

If you are having difficulties adjusting, or your mood is low, please talk to your

rehab team about assistance. Changes in emotions is common, don't be afraid to ask questions about this or talk with your rehab team to figure out who would be best to talk further with you about things.

The MDT can provide guidance and assistance as you re-learn or find new ways of doing things.

You can talk to your rehab team at any time if you have any questions or concerns. They are there to support you.

Questions to ask your rehab team

What do I want to ask my team?

What do I want to achieve?

What do I need to think about as my next step in my recovery?

The Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) is the lead agency for innovation in clinical care. We bring consumers, clinicians and healthcare managers together to support the design, assessment and implementation of clinical innovations across the NSW public health system to change the way that care is delivered.

The ACI's clinical networks, institutes and taskforces are chaired by senior clinicians and consumers who have a keen interest and track record in innovative clinical care. The ACI strives for innovations that are person-centred, clinically-led, evidence-based and value-driven.

The ACI also works closely with the Ministry of Health and the four other pillars of NSW Health to pilot, scale and spread solutions to healthcare system-wide challenges. We seek to improve the care and outcomes for patients by re-designing and transforming the NSW public health system.

www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au

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