Six steps to cardiac recovery:  
Information all cardiac patients should know prior to leaving hospital -  

Managing my heart health (MMHH), a resource for nurses to facilitate the conversation

1. Explain diagnosis / procedure

All patients should understand their diagnosis and procedure.
- Explain the diagnosis and provide care instructions – do not assume the patient understands what has just happened to them.
- Ask the patient if they have any questions about their diagnosis or procedure.
- Ensure the patient understands that a heart procedure is a treatment and not a cure for heart disease. Often patients do not understand they have a key role to play in managing their heart condition (see steps 2 to 6 below).

2. Highlight risk factors relevant to the patient

All patients should be familiar with their most relevant risk factors and the ongoing importance of managing these to reduce their risk of another heart event.
- Review the patient’s history and discuss the risk factors that are relevant to them.
- Patients are generally not aware that they are at greater risk of another heart event. Discuss the clinical risk (BP, cholesterol) and lifestyle risk (diet, smoking) factors and the importance of managing these to prevent a future attack.
- Explain the value of attending a cardiac rehabilitation program to support management of risk factors.

3. Emphasise importance of cardiac rehabilitation

All patients should be encouraged to attend a cardiac rehabilitation program.
- Explain the benefits of attending a cardiac rehabilitation program as a key part of recovery.
- Refer the patient to a cardiac rehabilitation program and provide program information.
- Advise they call the Heart Foundation Health Information Service for heart health information – 1300 36 27 87 (see overleaf).

4. Promote medication adherence

All patients should understand why it is important to take their medication.
- Check the patient understands the medications they need to take for their heart.
- Emphasise that they must not stop taking their medication without speaking to their doctor.
- Encourage them to discuss any concerns with their doctor.

5. Educate on warning signs of heart attack

All patients should know the symptoms of heart attack and chest pain management.
- Discuss how to manage their chest pain and instructions for GTN medication.
- Advise that not all heart attacks are the same and that symptoms can vary.
- Encourage patients to learn the warning signs and refer them to the Heart Foundation’s warning signs resources (warning signs fridge magnet included in MMHH resource) view warning signs DVD / TV Channel if available, the HeartFoundation You Tube channel or www.heartattackfacts.org.au

6. Encourage follow-up with doctor

All patients should understand the importance of GP and cardiologist follow up.
- Advise that regular visits with their doctor are essential to help monitor their heart health and medications.
- Encourage patients to discuss any questions relating to their medication, psychological health or recovery with their doctor or practice nurse.
- Inform the patient about resources available to help them with their recovery. Refer the patient to the Heart Foundation Health Information Service - 1300 36 27 87 and My heart, my life resource and app (see overleaf).
Managing my heart health is a resource for people with, or at high risk of heart disease. It provides you with practical advice to manage heart health and lifestyle.

To order the resource
email cvhnsw@heartfoundation.org.au

The Heart Foundation My heart, my life app is now available to download via the Apple App Store or Google Play store or visit www.myheartmylife.org.au

The new app will help you:
- manage your medicines
- track blood pressure and cholesterol
- learn about heart attack warning signs and what to do