



NEWS RELEASE

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St. Luke's Heart Unveils Idaho's First Cardiac Health and Rehabilitation Center

Meridian facility will help cardiovascular patients live a full and active life

Heart disease remains the nation's number one killer, but with proper treatment and lifestyle changes a diagnosis of heart disease doesn't have to be a death sentence.

To help people live with heart disease and to recover from heart attacks, St. Luke's is excited to open a comprehensive cardiac health and rehabilitation center – the first of its kind in Idaho.

The \$1.8 million, 11,000 square-foot center is located on the St. Luke's Meridian Medical Center campus adjacent to the main hospital in the Meadow Lake building, 3525 E. Louise, Dr., Suite 500.

"The goal of cardiac rehab is to stabilize, slow, or even reverse the progression of cardiovascular disease," said Dr. Frederick Costello, medical director of St. Luke's Heart Health and Rehabilitation Center. "Patients who commit to rehabilitation can improve the quality of their life, reduce risk factors and create a sense of well-being and optimism about the future."

The center features more than 50 pieces of heart-healthy exercise equipment, a full-size walking track with a joint-friendly surface, classrooms and video equipment for ongoing learning opportunities, and a kitchen for nutrition presentations and practice.

The physician-monitored program includes exercise, nutrition, weight management, medication and symptom management, ECG monitoring, education, counseling, and support. Patients will also have access to an exercise physiologist, physical therapist, and dietitian, who will work with the doctor to help patients achieve optimal health and risk reduction.

Patients will learn to modify risk factors including high blood pressure, smoking, high blood cholesterol, physical inactivity, obesity, and diabetes. They will also be counseled on topics such as the appropriate use of prescribed medications and overcoming depression.

To participate in a medically supervised cardiac rehabilitation program, patients must be referred to the St. Luke's center by their physicians.

People of all ages and ethnic backgrounds can benefit from cardiac rehabilitation. Rehab may help people who have had:

- A heart attack
- Angioplasty or coronary artery bypass grafting for coronary heart disease
- Heart valve repair or replacement
- A heart transplant or lung transplant
- Stable angina
- Heart failure

Two separate 2009 studies of heart disease and heart attack patients found significant benefits to cardiac rehabilitation.

A Brandeis University study examined mortality in more than 600,000 Medicare beneficiaries who were hospitalized in 1997 for heart disease or bypass surgery. The study followed the patients through 2002 and found that mortality rates were 21 to 34 percent lower in patients who had access to and took advantage of cardiac rehab.

A Mayo Clinic study that examined 2,351 Mayo Clinic patients who had undergone a coronary angioplasty, where a stent is placed in an artery of the heart to open up the blood flow, found a 45 to 47 percent decrease in mortality for the 40 percent of patients who participated in cardiac rehab.

"Studies have clearly shown the benefits of cardiac rehabilitation, but nationally fewer than 20 percent of eligible cardiac patients participate in rehabilitation," Dr. Costello said.

There are a number of reasons patients have not participated in cardiac rehab.

Until recently there was little or no coverage through private insurance and Medicare. But that is no longer an issue. Most insurance companies now cover rehabilitation. In July 2008 the Pulmonary and Cardiac Rehabilitation Act, which was first introduced in 2007 by Idaho Sen. Mike Crapo and Arkansas Sen. Blanche Lincoln, was passed into law. The act, which took effect Jan. 1, 2010, mandates Medicare coverage for cardiac rehabilitation services.

To learn more about St. Luke's Heart, visit www.stlukesonline.org.