

# **Your Heart Surgery: Realization and Repair**

## **Narrator**

If you're preparing for a major heart surgery, there's good news. Your health care providers believe your heart is repairable and you can be on your way to recovery very soon. When planning your return to good health, it's normal to feel uncertain about the future.

We've invited some experienced friends to share what they've learned and help you achieve a full recovery. As soon as you realize the need for surgery you can start planning.

## **Robert**

I found it helpful to list my goals at the outset, and write down all the reasons I wanted to get better.

## **Eva**

As both a nurse and a patient my advice is to check your options for medical work leave right away. And your likely out of pocket expenses for care and recovery, for everyone's piece of mind. Have a medical power of attorney in place too.

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When preparing to go to the hospital, here are some ideas to help keep you comfortable after surgery.

## **Liz**

You won't be able to twist or bend your torso at all right after surgery. So be sure to bring loose clothing and comfortable slip on shoes with non-skid traction. Your post-op nurses will probably encourage you to get up and walk the halls before long. So bring loose pants with an elastic waistband to wear underneath. Ask your doctor if you'll need any special kind of undergarments. You may need to wear a certain type of bra or perhaps a brace after surgery. And you'll likely need help getting dressed for the first few days.

## **Eva**

Talk with your doctor about your pain management routine and stick to it. Don't decide to be brave and go off the medication too early. High pain levels can lead to elevated stress. Which can make your recovery more challenging.

## **Narrator**

When it's time to go home from the hospital, everyone agrees, be sure you understand your instructions. And bring a friend who can help take notes on your post-op care. Once you're home from the hospital, you'll start the process of getting back into life.