



# Heart failure: referral for cardiac rehabilitation

NICE indicator

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[www.nice.org.uk/indicators/ind102](https://www.nice.org.uk/indicators/ind102)

## Indicator

The percentage of patients with heart failure diagnosed within the preceding 15 months with a record of an offer of referral for an exercise-based rehabilitation programme.

## Indicator type

General practice indicator suitable for use in the Quality and Outcomes Framework.

This document does not represent formal NICE guidance. For a full list of NICE indicators, see our [menu of indicators](#).

To find out how to use indicators and how we develop them, see our [NICE indicator process guide](#).

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# Rationale

The aim of this indicator is to ensure patients with heart failure are offered a supervised, group-based exercise rehabilitation programme. Attendance at a rehabilitation programme can reduce heart failure and hospitalisations, and significantly improve quality of life, and 6-minute walking test results.

For this indicator, if a patient has already attended a cardiac rehabilitation programme, for example, following a myocardial infarction, they do not need to be referred again. A further offer of referral could be made if the GP feels that the patient would benefit from repeating the programme. If a previous offer of referral was declined, the potential benefit of attending these programmes should be discussed with the patient and an offer of referral should be made if clinically appropriate.

## Source guidance

Chronic heart failure. NICE guideline NG106 (2018, updated 2025), recommendation 1.9.1

## Specification

**Numerator:** The number of patients in the denominator with a record of an offer of referral for an exercise-based rehabilitation programme (including those who have previously attended a cardiac rehabilitation programme).

**Denominator:** The number of patients with heart failure diagnosed within the preceding 15 months.

**Calculation:** Numerator divided by the denominator, multiplied by 100.

**Exclusions:**

- Patients whose heart failure is not stable.
- Patients who have conditions or devices that would preclude an exercise-based rehabilitation programme including uncontrolled ventricular response to atrial fibrillation, uncontrolled hypertension, and high-energy pacing devices set to be activated at rates likely to be achieved during exercise.

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Minimum population: The indicator would be appropriate to assess performance at individual general practice level.

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