



Colleen's story

Northern NSW Local Health District

When 62-year old Colleen had a heart attack she didn't expect to find any positives from the experience, but when it came time to attend her rehabilitation appointments she was pleasantly surprised.

Colleen, a retired teacher and mother-of-two living in Northern NSW, played sports regularly until her 40th birthday when she shattered her kneecap playing netball.

"After my injury I couldn't exercise like I used to, I gained weight and that unhealthy lifestyle eventually led to a cardiac arrest," Colleen explains.

Colleen was treated at Lismore Base Hospital and after being discharged she enrolled in the hospital's cardiac rehabilitation program. This involved weekly sessions with exercise and education to rebuild a healthy lifestyle.

Sessions were offered online due to COVID-19 restrictions.

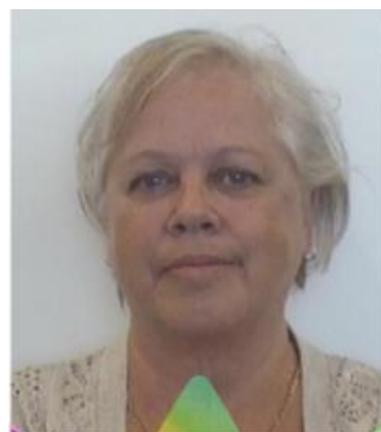
"I found being able to do my cardiac rehab online absolutely wonderful and I truly believe if the classes were only offered face-to-face I would have attended only one or two sessions," Colleen says.

"Living semi-rural makes it difficult to get to appointments as it is, but I was also unable to drive for six months after my cardiac arrest, so it would have been far too difficult to organise regular transport."

Getting connected to her online sessions was easy, Colleen says.

"The system was explained very carefully by my exercise physiologist Tiphonie before I left the hospital. Her method of sending emails with links was designed for even the most computer illiterate to be able to log-in easily."

"So, my advice for those who are new to virtual care is basically sit back and enjoy a far less stressful method of achieving your health care," Colleen says.



"The ability to work out in the comfort of my own home made those first few months of recovery so much easier and left me with no excuses to not exercise!"

"I would, and in fact constantly have, recommended virtual care to all within hearing."

Colleen

NSW Health would like to thank Colleen and the team at Northern NSW Local Health District for sharing their insights.