

This leaflet explains what cardiopulmonary resuscitation is, how decisions about it are made and answers some of the questions that people often ask.

What is cardiopulmonary resuscitation?

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is an emergency treatment that tries to restart the person's heart or breathing when these stop suddenly. It involves:

- inflating the lungs with a mask or tube inserted into the windpipe
 - Repeatedly pushing down very firmly on the chest
 - Using electric shocks to try to correct the rhythm of the heart.
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How successful is CPR?

Unfortunately, CPR does not often work. When CPR is attempted in hospital, the chances of the person surviving to discharge from hospital are 1 in 8. This is because CPR usually only works on people who experience sudden problems such as a heart attack when a person is otherwise generally fit.

CPR won't be successful for people naturally approaching the end of their life. They are much more likely to become sleepier over time and their heart and breathing gradually slows down and stops.

Am I likely to benefit from CPR if my heart and breathing stop?

Everyone is different. The chance of CPR reviving you will depend on:

- Why your heart and breathing have stopped
- Any illnesses or medical problems you have (or have had in the past)
- The overall condition of your health.

If you are coming towards the end of your life you are unlikely to benefit from CPR. If your doctor or nurse thinks that you may benefit from CPR they will discuss this with you and the likelihood of success in your particular case.

Who makes the decision?

The ultimate responsibility for the decision rests with the doctor caring for you. However, they will take your views into account where possible. If you are unable to express your views yourself it can be helpful for the healthcare team to talk to your friends and family about your wishes.

If there are people you do (or do not) want to be asked about your care, you should let the healthcare team know.

What if I don't want CPR?

If your doctor thinks you may benefit from CPR, you can decide whether you want it or not. You can refuse CPR even if there is a chance that it may help you.

If you would benefit from CPR you can still change your mind at any time as to whether you would want it or not. Please talk to your hospital Doctor or GP.

What about other treatment?

Decisions about CPR are just about resuscitation. Whatever the decision, you will continue to receive all the other treatment and care that you need.

What happens if I want CPR but staff say that it is not appropriate for me?

Your views are important and we want to involve you in discussions about your treatment and care. We recognise that these discussions can be very distressing for you and those close to you. Your doctor will discuss this issue with you sensitively. However, your doctor cannot offer a treatment that will not succeed. If you are unhappy with the decision made, your doctor will offer you the choice of having a second opinion from another doctor.

If a decision has been made not to try CPR how will the people involved in my care know about it?

If your doctor feels CPR will not work for you, or you have decided that you do not want CPR, this will be written on a form called "Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation" (a DNACPR form). This form will be kept with your health records. This information will be shared with staff caring for you both in hospital and at home. At home if an ambulance is called and crew know a decision not to try CPR has been made, they will give you any treatment you need and make you comfortable. They will not try CPR.

What if I have other questions about CPR which are not covered by this leaflet?

If you have other questions about CPR, please talk to your doctor or nurse who will be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have. They may refer you to a colleague who is better able to answer your questions.

Useful Information:

Ward.....

Key people involved in your care:

Consultant.....

Lead Nurse.....

This leaflet was developed by a team of experts in Lambeth and Southwark Trust with support from the Modernisation Initiative.

The University Hospital of North Staffordshire NHS Trust is grateful for their permission to use and adapt this leaflet locally.



Cardiopulmonary
resuscitation:
Information for
patients and their
families

