

Understanding Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

And deciding what is right for you

**This information
leaflet is about
Cardiopulmonary
Resuscitation,
DNACPR decisions &
conversations
around these**

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) is an emotive complex clinical area.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) **is a medical treatment.** Decisions regarding whether CPR will be attempted, and is an appropriate treatment for your individual circumstances, will be **made by your medical team.**

However, it is important that you have the opportunity to be involved in conversations and decisions about this if you wish.

This leaflet has been written to help you understand what CPR is and to support you to have conversations with your medical team.

If you have any further questions, please speak to the team looking after you.



What is Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)?

CPR is an emergency treatment that may sometimes be appropriate when someone's heart suddenly stops beating (**cardiac arrest**) and/or breathing stops (**respiratory arrest**).

The goal is to restart blood circulation (**heart beating**) and oxygen circulation (**breathing**).

CPR Includes:

Chest Compressions

Pushing firmly down on the chest to help blood circulate around the body

Electric Shocks

To get the heart pumping again

Breathing Assistance

Mouth to mouth, by mask or via a tube into your throat to get oxygen into the lungs and restart breathing

It can be harmful, causing:

Bruising on your chest

Broken ribs (fractures)

Lung Damage e.g. punctured lungs

There may also be initially unseen damage to other organs such as the heart, kidneys and brain.

How successful is CPR?

CPR attempts are **only successful** in a **small proportion** of people. Your chances of recovery are better if you are normally **fit and healthy**.

Only 1 out of 10 people who have a cardiac arrest outside of hospital will survive to leave hospital.

Factors that influence the success rates of CPR include:

- **What caused the breathing and heart to stop in the first place.**
Did the heart or breathing stop suddenly, or is the person dying of a serious underlying illness.
- **Whether or not the person is already very seriously ill.**
- **In serious underlying health conditions such as advanced cancer, motor neurone disease, heart failure, COPD, frailty and many other conditions it will not work.**

Even if CPR is successful in restarting the heart, it may leave a person injured, severely ill or disabled

E.g. If blood circulation has stopped or has been inadequate for some time this can cause significant brain damage.



How important is it to talk about resuscitation (CPR)?



An attempt at CPR is a **medical intervention** which may be distressing.

Sometimes the heart stops beating and breathing changes as someone is nearing the end of life as part of the **natural and expected** process of dying. CPR will not restart the heart and is inappropriate in this situation.

Having a conversation, and making decisions in advance, allows your family and those important to you to know your wishes about future treatments and helps ensure you can remain in your **preferred place of care**, surrounded by those important to you until the end of your life.

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- You should never feel pressured into making decisions around resuscitation.
 - Conversations around death and dying can be difficult and can make some people and their family and friends feel scared or upset.
 - We would always encourage you to have these conversations and can support you and your family during them if you would like.
 - It helps us develop a greater understanding of you as a person and know what your wishes are so that they can be respected.

How important is it to talk about Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)?



When you are living with a serious illness, it is important to **think ahead and plan** for your future care. This enables your clinical team to provide you with the right care at the right time.

It also ensures you do not have **tests or treatments** which are not helpful to you.

Decisions about CPR are part of this future care planning, and can help ensure you receive the **right care for you**.



Resuscitation Decisions

Your wishes are **very important to us. You will be listened to and your ideas, concerns and expectations will be explored.**

If your team feel that resuscitation is **unlikely to be successful because of the nature of your underlying health condition(s), they will explain this to you.**

 A Do Not Attempt Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR form will be completed)

If you **do not want an attempt at CPR, your wishes will be respected.**

 A Do Not Attempt Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR form will be completed)

 You can complete an advance decision to refuse treatment, refusing CPR, alongside this if you wish.

If the team feel that an attempt at Resuscitation **might be successful they will explain this to you and a decision will be made with you about what you want.**

 In the event of cardiopulmonary arrest, an attempt at CPR would be made.

If you have a DNACPR form in place this **only effects your treatment in the event of a cardiorespiratory arrest, all other treatments will continue to be given as clinically indicated.**



What if I don't agree with your decision?

We will **always explain the reasons for any decisions with you.**

Please **talk to the team looking after you if you have any questions, don't understand why the decision has been made or disagree with your treatment plan. Please don't feel uncomfortable to discuss your care or treatment decisions with us.**

If you **disagree with your resuscitation decision you can always ask for a 2nd opinion.**

Asking for a 2nd opinion **will not affect your treatment or care and may help us to identify and address any other worries or concerns that you may have.**

Do Not Attempt Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) forms

- Is a recognised way of **communicating to everyone involved in your care** that cardiopulmonary resuscitation will not be attempted when your heart stops beating or you stop breathing.
- Once completed an electronic copy is usually added to your medical records.
- You will be given the **original form** which will be signed and dated by the doctor responsible for your care.
- It is **important** that you and your family know where it is at all times e.g. *"message in a bottle in your fridge"* (ask us).
- If you are **admitted** to Queenscourt Hospice or to hospital it is important that you remember to **bring this with you**.
- If you **do not** wish to be resuscitated but **have not told anyone** then in an emergency a medical team may attempt CPR even if it is against your wishes. The team may do this either if they feel CPR is **clinically appropriate** at the time or if they were unaware of any medical condition making CPR inappropriate as it is an emergency situation.
- Your DNACPR Form will be **reviewed** on admission or discharge to Queenscourt Hospice or a Hospital.

But what does this actually mean?

- A DNACPR Order **ONLY** applies to you if you stop breathing or your heart stops beating. CPR will **NOT** be performed.
- **ALL** other treatment and care that you may be receiving now, and in the future, for your condition would continue as normal and **is not affected**.

Finally,

- You may wish to involve family and friends in your discussions so that everyone is aware of your wishes and decisions. This is particularly helpful if your illness means that you may be less able to **communicate clearly** in the future.
- If you have a **Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)** for Health then that person can advise Health Professionals of your wishes if you are unable to communicate or choose not to.
- You can **change your mind**. If you have previously chosen to be resuscitated but then change your mind **please** talk to us!
- **Your wishes are very important**, and we want you to feel comfortable with all decisions that affect you.



Useful Resources

For further information about **DNACPR** and other types of **Advance Care Planning** is available on the following websites:

www.resus.org.uk 🔍

www.nhs.uk 🔍



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