

The Basics of CPR

(Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation)

What is CPR?

CPR is an attempt to re-start the heart when someone has stopped breathing and the heart has stopped beating.

What Happens During a CPR Attempt?

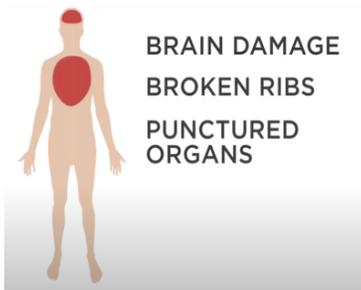
TV often makes CPR look quick and easy, but in reality, it is not. The chest is pushed on, down to two inches, 100 times each minute repeatedly. A special mask and bag and then a breathing tube into the mouth and down the trachea (windpipe) is used to pump air into the lungs. Electrical shocks may be given to the chest. An IV (tube into a vein) is usually placed to deliver medications.

Does CPR Work?

Studies show that about 15% of all people who have CPR attempted live through it. How well CPR works depends on the person's age, health, location and how quickly CPR is started after the heart has been stopped. Even if CPR is successful, CPR does not fix or improve the reason that caused the person's heart to stop or that the person will fully recover.



Injuries Occurring from Attempted CPR



The lack of blood to the brain due to the heart not beating can cause brain damage in only a few minutes. Up to half of people will have brain damage that will not get better. Almost all will have broken ribs and bruising; some may get burns on the skin from shocks, lung damage and bleeding in the chest as well as damage to the windpipe, lips and teeth. A long-term affect may include not being able to live alone.

(IPPC, 2018)

What If the Decision is to Try CPR?

If CPR attempt is the choice, talk about what results would be expected. The person may not be able to breathe without a machine (ventilator), not be able to communicate for some time, or to think, talk or know anyone. The person may be in a sedated or coma like state. The person will be cared for in an Intensive Care Unit and the healthcare agent or decision maker would be kept informed and need to make decisions. It is important to have a healthcare directive for the decision maker to know other choices.

What Happens if the Decision is NOT to try CPR?

Not attempting CPR requires a medical order called Do Not Resuscitate or DNR. Without this order, by default, all possible life saving treatments are started. DNR does not mean Do Not Treat. CPR is only one kind of treatment. If the choice is not to have CPR attempted, the person would be allowed to die naturally. There are many other care and treatments that can be given to keep a person comfortable. Whether or not CPR is attempted, ALL other medical care and treatments that that are chosen will be given.

How to Decide to Whether or Not to Try CPR?

Which option best matches the person's values and goals. It is also important to think about the risks and benefits of CPR to determine what is the right choices. Talk to doctors, nurses, social workers and about the chances of survival and what life may be life after CPR is attempted. It always is the choice of the individual or their decision maker if the person is unable to respond with a decision. Choices can change at any time.

How to Make Decisions about CPR Known?

- Tell family, friends and doctors
- Write the decision on a healthcare directive or POLST form
- Give copies of these forms to family and doctors

References / Resources:

Coalition for Compassionate Care. Decision Aid on CPR.

<https://coalitionccc.org/ItemDetail?iProductCode=001%20EN-AC18&Category=PUB&WebsiteKey=0a2ca98e-d803-448c-9cad-06171c65bed9>

Coalition for Compassionate Care. CPR: Your Chances of Survival are Better on TV.

<https://coalitionccc.org/CCCC/Blog/CPR-Your-Chances-of-Survival-are-Better-on-TV.aspx?WebsiteKey=0a2ca98e-d803-448c-9cad-06171c65bed9>

Coalition for Compassionate Care. What is CPR?

<https://coalitionccc.org/ItemDetail?iProductCode=013%20EN-APC16&Category=PUB&WebsiteKey=0a2ca98e-d803-448c-9cad-06171c65bed9>

Honoring Choices Minnesota. Advance Care Planning Information: Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation. https://www.honoringchoices.org/images/pdf/HCM_Info_CPR_2015.pdf

Indiana Patient Preferences Coalition (IPPC). POST Basics- An Overview of Important Treatment Decisions (June 22,2018)- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ci7KIDJQpFU>

Joyner, N. (2019). What if the Doctor Asks You about CPR?

<https://www.nancyjoyner.com/contact-nancy-joyner/>

Respecting Choices®-Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Decision Aid-

https://respectingchoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Decision_Aid_CPR.pdf