

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

Facts

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) may be done when a person's breathing or heartbeats have stopped or are ineffective. Basic CPR involves pressing hard and rapidly on the chest and may include blowing air into the lungs.

Most hospitals and other healthcare facilities will start CPR on a patient having cardiac or respiratory arrest unless there are clear medical orders not to do so.

In the home, emergency personnel will start CPR unless there is an out-of-hospital Do Not Resuscitate (DNR), POLST, MOLST or MOST form signed by a physician.

Benefits

CPR works best for a healthy person whose heart has suddenly stopped beating due to an accident or heart attack. It is very important that CPR begin within 5 minutes of cardiac arrest.

Burdens

Many people think that CPR is more successful than it really is. Some facts about CPR include:

- Less than 17% of hospitalized patients survive CPR and in time, go home.
- Less than 5% of people who have advanced, chronic illness survive CPR.
- Less than 2% of frail, elderly living in long-term facilities survive CPR.

Complications of CPR can include:

- Need for mechanical ventilation (breathing machine) and corresponding intensive care unit (ICU) stay.
- Decreased brain functioning.
- Broken ribs and/or collapsed lung(s)

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