

CPR is a procedure health providers can use to try to start a person's heart if it stops beating. CPR stands for **C**ardio-**P**ulmonary **R**esuscitation.

Here is what happens with CPR:



1. The provider may need to push very hard on a person's chest.



2. The provider may need to use a machine that gives an electric shock to the heart.



3. The provider may need to put a tube down the person's throat to help them breathe.

Potential Benefits: CPR helps some people.

If a person's heart stops and no CPR is given that person will die. CPR is the way to keep the person alive, but it often does not work.

In fact, for people who are in the hospital the success rate for CPR is 15%. In other words, if 100 people are given CPR, 15 of them would live and 85 would not survive. If a person's heart stops when they are older or very sick, the chance of living after CPR goes down a lot. For example, for people with cancer or kidney disease that has gotten bad, only 5% would be alive after getting CPR. In other words, in 100 people, 95 would die, and 5 would survive.

Potential Risks: CPR can lead to other problems.

It is important to know that people who are alive after CPR usually have health problems.

Examples include:

Broken ribs – Pushing on a person’s chest in CPR often breaks some ribs.

Brain injury – It is common after CPR to have memory loss, speech problems, or to have parts of the body that cannot move. This is called paralysis. Many people do not recover from this kind of brain injury.

Loss of independence – Most people with a serious illness who survive CPR can no longer take care of themselves.

What does CPR DO?

CPR will restart some peoples’ hearts. Of the small group of people who survive CPR, most will have significant injuries.

What does CPR NOT DO?

CPR does not cure or fix any disease. Chronic medical problems do not go away because of CPR.

Would you want CPR if your heart stops beating?

There is a lot to think about before saying yes or no to CPR.

Yes to CPR

Most people who say yes to CPR feel it is important to live as long as they can. They are willing to take a chance to live longer even if it means they would likely die or survive with broken ribs and brain injury.

No to CPR

Most people who say no to CPR feel it is more important to be healthy and independent than to live as long as possible. They want to avoid being kept alive artificially even if it means that they might miss a chance to live longer.

Many people think about how their choice will affect their friends and family.

Do you worry about this? Have you talked with them? Talking with your friends, family, and your health care team about your wishes is very important. Talking about your wishes will help protect your rights and values.