

PATIENT DECISION GUIDE

Life-Sustaining Treatment

What is CPR?

CPR is the process of trying to restart the heart and pump blood to the body. CPR is given when:

- Someone has stopped breathing, and the heart stops beating.
- Someone has a type of heartbeat that leads to no pulse and death.

What CPR might involve:

- A CPR-trained individual pushes on your chest to try to start the heart again.
- A CPR-trained individual pushes air into your lungs.
- Electrical shocks may be given to the chest.
- If your heart restarts, but you cannot breathe on your own, you may be connected to a breathing machine called a ventilator.

What is a ventilator?

A ventilator does the work of breathing for you if you are too sick to breathe on your own. You are connected to a breathing machine through a tube placed through your mouth into your windpipe. Medicines may be given to make you sleepy so there is less discomfort.

What is Medically Administered Nutrition?

Medically administered nutrition means giving liquid food and water to someone who is too sick to eat or drink on their own. This includes an IV line being placed in your vein or a feeding tube placed in your stomach.

continued

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The POLST form: Three Decisions

DECISION ONE: CPR or No CPR *(required)*

In a medical emergency, the first thing a medical provider will do is see if you have a pulse or are breathing. If you do not have a pulse and are not breathing, the provider wants to know if you want CPR.

- Yes, I do want CPR if I am unresponsive, have no pulse and am not breathing.
- No, I do not want CPR if I am unresponsive, have no pulse and am not breathing.

If you do not want to make a decision about CPR, the standard of care will be provided, which is almost always attempting CPR.

DECISION TWO: Medical Interventions *(optional)*

If you have a pulse and you are breathing, but you are also experiencing a medical issue, the most important question is if you want to go to the hospital. If yes, what treatments you want applied.

- Full treatment:** transfer me to the hospital and provide all necessary treatment. I want to live as long as possible. *(This must be selected when selecting CPR in section A.)*
- Selective Treatment:** transfer me to the hospital for basic medical treatment, but I do not want to be on a ventilator.
- Comfort-focused treatment:** I want to be as comfortable as possible where I am, but transfer me to the hospital if my pain or symptoms cannot be alleviated.

DECISION THREE: Medically Administered Nutrition *(optional)*

Although it isn't critical for emergency care, it is very helpful for healthcare providers to know your wishes about feeding tubes, called medically administered nutrition.

- Yes, I do want long-term artificial nutrition if I am no longer able to take foods or liquids by mouth.
- No, I do not want long-term artificial nutrition if I am no longer able to take foods or liquids by mouth.

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