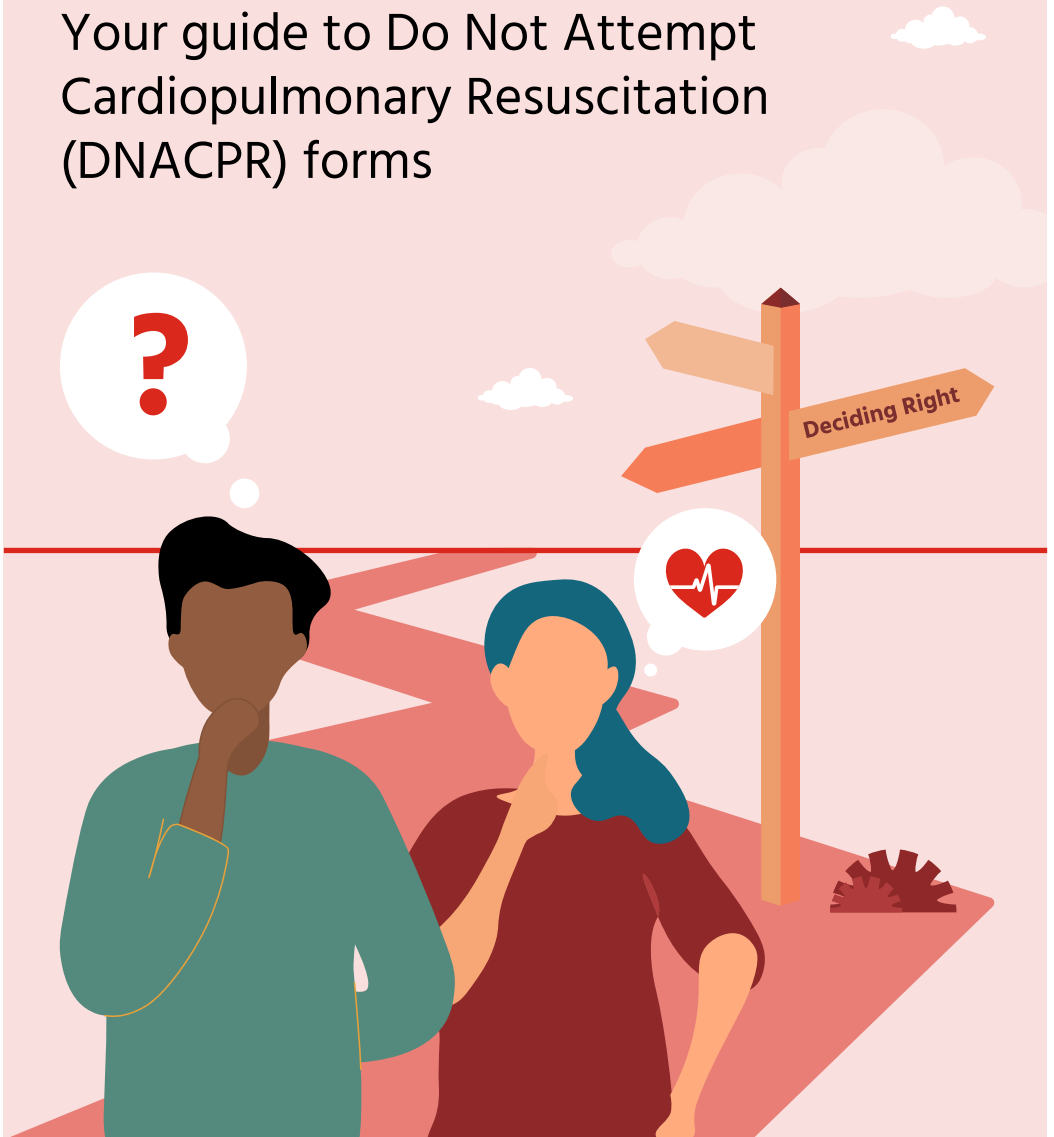


# What will happen if my heart stops?

Your guide to Do Not Attempt  
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation  
(DNACPR) forms



# This leaflet is here to help you talk about CPR. It will cover:

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# What is CPR?

**CPR is the name for a set of emergency treatments. We use them to try and keep someone alive if their heart stops beating and their breathing stops.**

When the heart and breathing stop, it is called also **Cardiopulmonary arrest**. The aim of CPR is to restart the heart and breathing.

**CPR Can include:**

- repeatedly pushing down firmly on your chest.
- using electric shocks to try and restart your heart.
- inflating your lungs using a facemask or a tube in your mouth and windpipe.



## How often is CPR successful?

Most people do not survive, recover and leave hospital after CPR. It is something we only do as a last resort.

**If it is outside hospital, it is fewer than 1 in 10 people (9%).**

**In patients with frailty this drops to 1 in 20 (5%).<sup>2</sup>**

Your wellbeing before CPR also has a big impact. A long-term condition or terminal illness can make it difficult for you to recover. You will be less likely to leave hospital with the same level of physical and mental health.<sup>1</sup>



## Who will decide whether I have CPR or not?

Some people already know they do not want CPR. They would prefer to have a natural death. In this case, they can refuse CPR.

We have a special form you can use to refuse a treatment. It is called an Advance Decision to Refuse Treatment (ADRT) form. The ADRT form is explained in more detail in the Deciding Right pack.

If you don't have an ADRT, then it comes down to a medical judgement from medical staff. This is based on your chances of recovery along with the impact on your quality of life. We will only perform CPR if it is in your best interest. The senior clinician in the team caring for you has the final say on this.

## How can you say it is not in my best interests not to try CPR?

Even when it works, CPR can cause pain and injury. This might include things like bruising and broken ribs. It is a traumatic procedure. You could spend a lot of time in intensive care after. This can be upsetting for you and your relatives.

Some people never get back to the same level of physical or mental health they had before. It can have a big impact on their independence and care needs. Some people may have a brain injury or go into a coma.



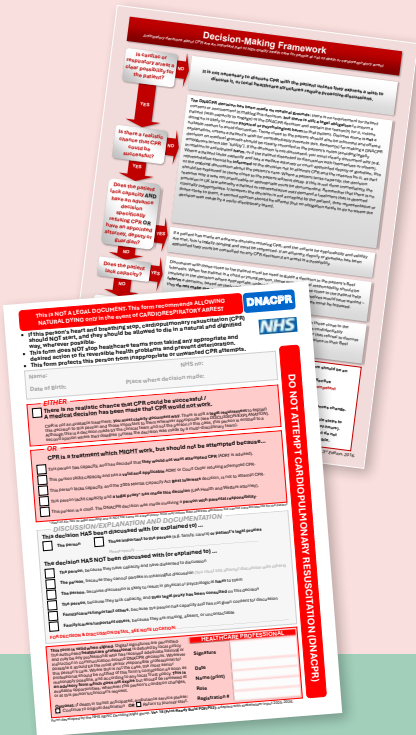
# What is a DNACPR form?

If clinical staff find CPR is not in your best interest, they must sign a form to say so. This form is called Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) form. It tells other clinical staff not to perform CPR on you.

The DNACPR form is a medical form not a legal form. It gives instructions to clinical staff to follow if your heart and breathing stop. That is why the senior clinician in the team has the final say on it.

A DNACPR form won't affect other parts of your care. We will still offer you the treatments and care for your condition that we think are best. It only stops CPR.

To summarise:  
A DNACPR is a form completed by healthcare professionals. They only do this if they feel CPR is not in your best interests.



## What if I disagree with my DNACPR form?

The senior clinician in the team caring for you has the final say. But you can make it known that you strongly disagree. If you do, they will usually ask for a second opinion. This will be an independent advocate.

If there is still disagreement, there are formal steps to follow. These steps are required by law or the relevant code of practice.

## If I'm too unwell to make decisions can a loved one do it for me?

Yes, your family or friends can tell the healthcare team what they think your wishes would be. They cannot insist on treatments. But they can help healthcare staff provide the right care for you.

If you have a valid DNACPR or ADRT form, make your loved ones know about it. Choose people you trust to correctly explain your choices to the healthcare team.



# What if a loved one has lasting power of attorney for me?

Lasting power of attorney for health only comes into effect if you are too unwell to make your own decisions. In that case, the person with power of attorney becomes the sole decision maker for you. They will be able to meet with staff on your behalf. That includes choosing from the treatments that are open to you.



[www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-you/deciding-right/](http://www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-you/deciding-right/)



Scan the QR code to access a blank DNACPR form

If you would like to leave a compliment or raise a complaint, you can contact us in any of the following ways:

Email: [nencicb.complaints@nhs.net](mailto:nencicb.complaints@nhs.net)

Freepost address: **FREEPOST NENC ICB COMPLAINTS**

Online: Visit [www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/contact-us/complaints-concerns-and-compliments/](http://www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/contact-us/complaints-concerns-and-compliments/) to complete our complaints form.

If you have a general enquiry, please email [nencicb-sun.reception@nhs.net](mailto:nencicb-sun.reception@nhs.net)

**Written by Dr Finlay Copeland**

<sup>1</sup>Gavin D Perkins, Jerry P Nolan, Jasmeet Soar, Claire Hawkes, Jonathan Wyllie, Sophie Skellett, Andrew Lockey & Sue Hampshire; 'Epidemiology of cardiac arrest Guidelines'; May 2021, [<https://www.resus.org.uk/library/2021-resuscitation-guidelines/epidemiology-cardiac-arrest-guidelines>]

<sup>2</sup><https://www.uhsussex.nhs.uk/resources/cardio-pulmonary-resuscitation-cpr-in-people-with-frailty/>