

COMPASSION - LEADERSHIP - EXCELLENCE

What happens if I change my mind after I consent to a DNR order?

You or anyone who consents to a DNR order on your behalf can withdraw that consent at any time simply by informing your Physician, Nurses, Paramedics or others responsible for your care of the decision. Removal of your medical bracelet and destruction of the Directive form will ensure that you receive full resuscitation efforts from Paramedics in an Emergency, in the event that you cannot communicate.

What happens to a DNR order if I am transferred from a nursing home to hospital or visa versa?

The health facility where you are sent can continue the DNR order but is not obligated to do so. If the order is not continued, you or anyone who decided on your behalf will be informed and can request that the order be entered again.

If I request a DNR order, is my physician bound to honor my wishes?

If you don't want to be resuscitated and you request a DNR order, your physician must either:

- enter the order into your chart, or
- transfer responsibility for your care to another physician; or
- refer the matter to a dispute mediation system (patient representative) in the hospital or nursing home. The mediation system is only authorized to mediate disputes; it cannot overrule your decision.

If mediation has not resolved the dispute within 72 hours, your physician should enter the order or transfer you to the care of another physician.

What happens if I do not have the capacity to decide for Myself?

You are presumed by law to be mentally capable of deciding about CPR unless two physicians, or a court,

determines that you no longer have the capacity to make the decision. You will be informed of this decision if you are able to understand it, and no DNR order will be written if you object.

What should I do if I have questions?

Don't be afraid to ask. Speak frankly with your Physician and your family. Ask the questions you have and respect the answers you receive. The prospect of death is frightening for many and the idea of losing you upsetting, but other outcomes may be more so.

Your physician should be first for your questions. He or she has knowledge of you others do not.

Family, nurses, social workers, and personal confidants can help you as well.

The Information you need is available.



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DO NOT RESUSCITATE ORDERS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**A GUIDE FOR PATIENTS
AND FAMILIES**

What is a Do-Not-Resuscitate-Order (Directive)?

A do-not-resuscitate order (DNR) in the patient's medical chart instructs the medical staff not to try to revive the patient if breathing or heartbeat has stopped. This means Physicians, Nurses, Paramedics, and others will not initiate such emergency procedures as artificial respiration, external chest compressions (CPR), electric shock, insertion of a tube to open the patient's airway (intubation), injection of medicine into the heart or open chest heart massage.

If a patient is in a nursing home a DNR order instructs the staff not to perform emergency resuscitation and not to transfer the patient to a hospital for such procedures.

Who can request a DNR order?

Under Maine Law all adult patients can request a DNR order. If you are sick and incapable of deciding about resuscitation, a family member, others close to you, or one with Health Care Power of Attorney can decide on your behalf.

What are the advantages an disadvantages of CPR?

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), when successful, restores heartbeat and breathing and enables the patient to resume his or her previous lifestyle. In other cases, CPR may fail to restore basic life functions or only partially succeed, leaving the patient brain-damaged or otherwise impaired.

The success of CPR depends on the patient's overall medical condition and level of functioning before the incident. Age alone is not a predictor of success, although illness and frailties associated with advanced age often result in less successful outcomes.

Is my right to request and receive other treatments affected by a DNR order?

No. A DNR order is only a decision about CPR and does not relate to other treatment. You can predetermine other treatment preferences in a Living Will (which may contain a DNR order)

Are DNR orders ethically acceptable?

Yes. It is widely recognized by health care professionals, clergy, lawyers, and others that DNR orders are medically and ethically appropriate under certain circumstances. For some patients, CPR offers more burdens than benefits and may be contrary to the patient's wishes.

Is My consent required for a DNR order?

Yes, your physician must obtain your consent before entering a DNR order into your record if you are mentally capable of deciding, unless discussion about CPR and your condition would cause you severe harm. In an emergency, it is assumed that all patients would consent to CPR unless a DNR order is in the record.

How can I make my wishes about DNR known?

An adult patient in a hospital or nursing home can consent to a DNR order orally, as long as two witnesses are present. You can make your wishes known before or during hospitalization in writing, before any two adults who must sign your statement as witnesses. A living will may be used to convey these wishes as long as it is properly witnessed.

You can specify that you want a DNR order only under certain circumstances (such as if you become terminally ill or permanently unconscious) or that you wish only specific CPR procedures performed such as artificial respiration, but not electric shock.

Before making a decision about DNR, you should speak with your physician about your overall health and the benefits and burdens CPR would provide for you. A full and early discussion between you and your doctor can avoid later misunderstandings.

How will Paramedics know I have a DNR order in effect?

In the past this has been a problem. Paramedics have a duty to act unless the patient's wishes are otherwise documented. Maine Emergency Medical Services currently endorses two Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Forms that will be easily recognized by responders. One may choose between the two different forms available, depending upon whether the patient has the capacity to

make an informed decision. It is recommended that either be used in conjunction with Medic-Alert type jewelry:

- (1) The Maine EMS **Comfort Care/DNR Directive** form is available for use by anyone over 18 years of age who is capable of making an informed decision. By completing the form, the person named on the form is directing EMS crews to not attempt resuscitation if the person's heart or breathing stops. The **Comfort Care/DNR Directive** form must be signed by a licensed physician, who attests that the person has the mental capacity to make an informed decision concerning Do-Not-Resuscitate. A physician is under no obligation to sign the **Comfort Care/DNR Directive** form, but may do so if requested by the person whose name appears on the form.

- (2) The Maine EMS **Comfort Care/DNR Order** form is used when the person - whose name appears on the form - does not have the capacity to make an informed decision (e.g., guardianship, surrogate). When completed and signed by the patient's physician and guardian/surrogate, the form documents a physician order to withhold resuscitation.

Either of these forms are available online for download at DeltaAmbulance.org/DNR for use by your medical professionals and family.



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