



Resuscitation in Long Term Care

Resuscitation is an emergency medical treatment used when a person has stopped breathing and/or their heart has stopped beating. Its goal is to restore blood flow and oxygen to the heart, lungs, and brain. Cardiac arrest may occur due to a heart attack, abnormal heart rhythms, or advanced heart disease. Respiratory arrest may result from choking, suffocation, allergic reactions, or advanced lung disease.

The decision about attempting resuscitation is complex and often emotional. It should be based on the residents' rights, values, beliefs, and wishes regarding their own care.

Components of CPR

- Chest compressions: Manual pumping of the heart by pressing on the chest.
- Rescue breathing: Manually providing breaths into the lungs.
- Intubation: Insertion of a breathing tube to provide more effective ventilation using a bag-valve-mask device (invasive).
- Defibrillation: Delivery of an electrical shock to treat certain abnormal heart rhythms. It cannot be used if there is no heart rhythm.
- Medications: Administration of emergency medications through an intravenous (IV) line to support heart function and blood pressure (invasive).

Consequences of Performing CPR

- Survival: Outcomes are generally poorer in older adults with advanced age, frailty, multiple medical conditions, or impaired cognition.
- Physical and neurological injuries: CPR can result in broken ribs, internal injuries, and brain injury due to lack of oxygen.
- Quality of life: Even when CPR is successful, recovery may be prolonged and the person may not return to their previous level of function.

Goals of Care

Ideally, everyone should discuss their future healthcare wishes with their family while they are still able to make decisions and choose a Power of Attorney/Substitute Decision-Maker who will honour those wishes. It is important to understand that CPR is often unsuccessful in frail older adults. Decisions about resuscitation should balance the potential risks and benefits with the person's values, beliefs, and goals.



Questions? Please speak with your nursing team.
We are here to support you and your family.

