

Advanced Care Planning – End of Life Care

We would like to offer you the chance to discuss your wishes about your future medical care. The current corona virus pandemic has made this matter more pressing and we would encourage you to take some time to think about your wishes and discuss these with family and friends.

Please feel free to discuss this with your GP if you have any questions and if you make a decision please inform the practice so that it can be recorded in your notes.

**Where to start?**

It may help to consider the question- if you were to become seriously unwell with an infection such as corona virus how would you like to be cared for?

Care planning is not only one decision about whether you wish to be resuscitated with CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) or not, but also about where you would wish to be cared for e.g. at home or in hospital if possible, and by whom.

As a team of medical professionals working in the community we will try as best we can to help facilitate your wishes, however in exceptional circumstances and if services are overwhelmed this may not always be possible. We will do our utmost to care for you with compassion and dignity.

**What do we mean by resuscitation?**

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation is the manual process of trying to restart the heart when it stops. This is usually done by compressing the chest with force and providing oxygen to the airway. Please note that during the corona virus pandemic this will consist ONLY of chest compressions (no airway management) due to the risk of infection.

Survival rates (for those without significant medical problems) from an out of hospital cardiac arrest receiving prompt CPR are 10%, with a 3-4% chance of survival at 1 year. This is based on the assumption of using chest compressions and airway management- something that is not possible during the corona pandemic.

Similar CPR undertaken in the hospital setting has a survival rate of 20% immediately, and 5-6% at 1 year.

You can decide to refuse resuscitation, and this would mean that if your heart were to stop beating health professionals would not try to restart it. Your wishes can be recorded in a Do Not Attempt Resuscitation form (DNAR) form. These forms are shared with the local ambulance service and the out of hours doctors so everyone is aware of your wishes. Please speak to your GP if you would like to have one of these.

**What about other forms of care that I may wish to refuse?**

An Advanced Decision to Refuse Treatment form is used to specify what other forms of treatment a patient may not wish to receive other than resuscitation, e.g. blood transfusions, ventilation, dialysis, organ support or an admission to an intensive care unit. More information on how to complete one of these can be found on <https://mydecisions.org.uk/>.

Please feel free to contact us to discuss this further and it is very important that you let us know if you have signed one of these forms so we can let the emergency services know, making sure you receive appropriate care in line with your wishes.

**What does being admitted to hospital mean?**

Doctors admit patients to hospital when they are too sick to be managed at home. This is normally done to provide more intensive treatment and other options that cannot be provided

in the community e.g. ventilators, more frequent blood tests, surgery etc. In the case of the corona pandemic being admitted to hospital may be offered to those who are very sick and are requiring breathing support. If they continue to worsen then ventilatory support may be required, in this case the virus has caused their lungs to stop working and they need extra help to oxygenate the body so a machine takes over.

Due to the nature of the condition there is not a cure that is available in hospital, it is purely supportive therapy and a matter of time. The body needs to fight off the infection itself.

While in hospital it is highly unlikely you will be able to have visitors as the risks of infecting others including health care professionals is too great.

*If you do not wish to be considered for admission to hospital or ventilatory support please discuss this with your GP.*

**If I decide not to go to hospital what happens?**

If you decide that you would rather not go to hospital then your care will take place in your own home. We will use oral and injectable medication to make you comfortable and to ease any symptoms you may have. We will keep in contact with you and review your symptoms regularly.

If you have corona virus, or are presumed to have this virus, those self-isolating with you will be advised to use protective measures when caring for you, preferably an apron, gloves and a facemask.

**\*\*Please speak to your GP about this further if you would like to consider advanced care planning. We would encourage you to discuss this with your family and loved ones when you are well, so that your wishes can be known if you were to become unable to communicate them at a later date\*\***

Dr Ruth Bedford  
7<sup>th</sup> April 2020