

## CPR Decision Aid

### **What is CPR and when is it needed?**

CPR stands for cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and it is used to try and restart a person's heart when it has stopped beating. It is standard practice for health care workers to do CPR unless the person has a written record saying that they do not want CPR done if their heart stops.

### **How is CPR done?**

There are many things that can be done during CPR such as:

- Pushing down on the chest about 2 – 2 ½ inches, many times each minute to make the heart pump blood.
- Giving an electrical shock through the chest to make the heart beat normally again.
- Giving drugs to help the heart start beating again.
- Putting a mask on your face, or a tube in your windpipe to help you to breathe.

### **How can CPR cause harm?**

- Many people have broken ribs or breastbone after CPR. There may also be bruising on the chest.
- There could be burns on the chest from the electrical shocks.
- More than half of people who recover from CPR will have some brain damage that could be long-lasting.
- It is possible to vomit during CPR. If this gets into the lungs it can cause pneumonia.

### **Who is most likely to be helped by CPR?**

- People who were healthy & active before their heart stopped.
- People who have CPR started within a few seconds of their heart stopping.
- People who have a type of heartbeat that is helped by electrical shock.

### **Who is least likely to be helped by CPR?**

- People who have an illness they will not recover from (also called a terminal illness) like advanced cancer.
- People who are severely ill with heart, lung, liver, or kidney failure.
- People who are very weak, frail, or older.

## What happens if I decide not to have CPR?

- If you decide not to have CPR if your heart stops, you can still get other treatments like surgery and pain medicines.

## What are my chances of surviving if I have CPR?

- Whether you are in the hospital or outside of the hospital when your heart stops beating affects your chances of survival.
- In the hospital, your chance of surviving after CPR is 50%. Surviving to be discharged from the hospital with good neurological (brain) outcomes is 8-14%.
- Outside of the hospital, your chance of surviving after CPR is 23%. Surviving to be discharged from the hospital with good neurological (brain) outcomes is 3%.

(Statistics from: University of Arizona, Arizona Center on Aging, Elder Care, 2015)

## Think about your goals when deciding whether you would want to have CPR if your heart stopped beating.

CPR is appropriate	CPR is not appropriate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Living a long life is a goal, no matter if you are healthy</li><li>○ Dying peacefully isn't a goal</li><li>○ Avoiding a drawn-out death isn't a goal</li><li>○ Being comfortable isn't a goal</li><li>○ You have a high tolerance to pain</li><li>○ You are willing to risk having a bad outcome (e.g. some degree of brain damage) from CPR</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Living a long life is not a goal</li><li>○ Dying peacefully or naturally is a goal</li><li>○ Avoiding a drawn-out death is a goal</li><li>○ Being comfortable is a goal</li><li>○ Having a low tolerance to pain</li><li>○ You are not willing to risk having a bad outcome (e.g. some degree of brain damage) from CPR</li></ul>

(Adapted from: The University of Arizona, Arizona Center on Aging, Elder Care, 2015)

**For more information talk to your doctor, or if you are a patient in the hospital, contact the BCH Palliative Care team at 303-415-7358.**