

Holy Redeemer Hospice

Allowing Natural Death

Hospice care typically focuses on allowing the natural progression of an illness while providing relief from pain and other symptoms. While it is not a requirement to forego life sustaining measures such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) in order to have hospice care, most people choose to focus on quality of life and comfort.

You or other family members may have questions about allowing the natural progression of an illness. Outside sources such as popular television shows or movies often provide confusing information and misconceptions about the burdens versus the benefits of end of life care treatments like CPR.

Some important facts about Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR):

Below are a few facts about CPR that you might not know. This information is important to consider when making decisions about your or your loved one's care.

- CPR is designed for healthy people when the heart stops beating or when breathing stops suddenly. The survival rate is less than 15% for people without any underlying medical conditions.
- CPR was never intended for a person dealing with life limiting illness. The success rate in these circumstances declines to less than 1%.
- Although CPR may restart the heart, its success will be temporary and it may cause additional problems such as broken bones, brain damage, or dependency on a ventilator.
- CPR will never cure you or your loved one's underlying condition.
- The emotional and physical pain of cardiopulmonary resuscitation is not easy to talk about but should be discussed with your family. Your care team can talk to your doctor and develop a plan to allow natural death.
- Allowing Natural Death is sometimes referred to as a "Do Not Resuscitate" (DNR) order. Do not resuscitate does not mean "Do not treat". All measures can and will be used to ensure appropriate medical care, comfort measures, and relief of pain or other symptoms.

Allowing natural death provides you the opportunity to peacefully support your loved one during the last hours of life. Comfort, support, and dignity are always the primary focus for you and your loved ones.