

Frequently-asked Questions

I am a Comfort One patient. What if I am choking or get into a car accident? Will I be allowed to just die?

No. EMS personnel will assess and treat you using standard procedures. For example, if you are choking, they will attempt to remove the obstruction and restore normal breathing, or if you are injured in a car accident or slip and fall in your home, they will treat you following standard medical procedures. If your heart stops beating, however, they will not resuscitate you, with one exception. If a health care provider, in the course of performing emergency medical services on you in the field (outside of a medical facility), through his or her actions causes you to go into cardiac or respiratory arrest, the health care provider can contact an online physician by radio or telephone and the physician can order that CPR be performed. The health care provider cannot perform CPR without being ordered to do so by the physician.

I am not terminally ill; however, I have many health conditions and don't want to be resuscitated if my heart stops. Do I qualify for the program?

No. To qualify for the Alaska Comfort One Program, you must have a qualifying condition which includes permanent unconsciousness or an incurable or irreversible illness or injury that, without administration of life-sustaining procedures, will result in death in a short period of time.

What if my doctor enrolls me in Comfort One and I change my mind?

Only you or your doctor can revoke a Comfort One DNR order. You can revoke your Comfort One status at any time by destroying the enrollment form and wallet card or by returning the enrollment forms and bracelet to your doctor for proper disposal. If you choose to revoke the Comfort One order, please contact your doctor or other health care provider and request him or her to contact emergency dispatch and any other agency which has been given a copy of the enrollment form. If EMS is called and at the last minute you change your mind, tell them you have changed your mind. If you are unconscious and have not communicated your intention to revoke your Comfort One status, unless your doctor revokes the order, EMS personnel will not resuscitate you, and you will be allowed to die in the natural course of your illness.

My family and friends know I don't want to be resuscitated if my heart stops beating. If I am not enrolled in the Comfort One Program but my family or friends tell EMS at the scene of an emergency that I don't wish to be resuscitated, won't that be sufficient?

No. You must have a Comfort One form, wallet card or bracelet with you.

What happens if I am unable to sign the Comfort One form?

A doctor may issue a Do Not Resuscitate order (DNR) for a patient and must document the grounds for the order in the patient's medical file. It is not necessary for you to sign, if you are unable to do so.

I have a Living Will. Why do I need a DNR?

A Do Not Resuscitate order is different from an Advance Health Care Directive, sometimes called a Living Will. An Advance Health Care Directive is designed to allow the patient to express his or her wishes regarding life-sustaining treatment and other medical care for such time when he or she is unable to make treatment decisions. The patient's instructions, however, cannot take effect without a doctor's DNR order. In order to issue a DNR order, the doctor must first determine that the patient has a terminal condition or is in a state of permanent unconsciousness. EMS personnel cannot honor an Advance Health Care Directive or Living Will unless there is a Comfort One order in place and they are presented with the enrollment form, wallet card or bracelet.

Can a Comfort One order be entered for a child?

Yes. Although it may be an emotionally difficult situation, health care providers are required to honor a Comfort One order for a child to the same extent that they must honor one for an adult.