

Table of Contents

Introduction to Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Agreements	2
Significance of a DNR	2
Purpose of a DNR	2
Legal and Ethical Considerations	2
Patient Rights and Consent	3
Ethical Principles	3
Legal Frameworks	3
Patient and Family Rights	3
Family Participation	3
Revocation	4
DNR Instructions and Medical Procedures	4
Withheld Procedures	4
Medical Staff Response	4
How to Complete and Execute a DNR Agreement	4
DNR Agreement Sample Template	5
Essential Fields	5
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)	6
General Questions	6
DNR Order Specifics	6
Common Concerns and Misconceptions	6



Introduction to Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Agreements

A Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) agreement is a vital legal document. It gives instructions to healthcare providers. The instruction is to not perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). This applies if a patient's heart stops beating or if they stop breathing.

Significance of a DNR

DNR agreements are important in medical decision-making. They allow individuals to refuse life-sustaining treatment. This ensures medical care aligns with their wishes and values. This is especially relevant when facing irreversible or terminal illnesses.

Purpose of a DNR

Individuals with terminal illnesses often request a DNR order. Others with severe chronic conditions may also request one. The request reflects a preference for quality of life. This preference is over prolonged life achieved through aggressive medical interventions. The purpose is to ensure the patient's end-of-life wishes are respected.

Legal and Ethical Considerations

This section addresses the legal and ethical aspects of Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) agreements. It aims to clarify the framework within which these agreements are made and implemented.

Patient Rights and Consent

A DNR agreement is only valid when a patient, or their legal representative, gives informed consent. This consent must be given voluntarily, understanding the nature and consequences of the agreement. Patients have the right to refuse medical treatment, including resuscitation.



Ethical Principles

DNR orders are grounded in ethical principles that guide healthcare decisions.

- **Autonomy:** Respecting the patient's right to make decisions about their own care.
- **Beneficence:** Acting in the patient's best interest.
- **Non-maleficence:** Avoiding harm to the patient.
- **Justice:** Ensuring fair and equitable allocation of resources.

These principles ensure that DNR decisions respect patient wishes and prevent unnecessary suffering.

Legal Frameworks

DNR agreements are subject to state laws and regulations. These laws outline the requirements for a valid DNR order, including the necessary documentation and consent procedures. It's essential to comply with the specific legal requirements of the relevant jurisdiction.

Patient and Family Rights

Patients have the right to make informed choices about their medical care. This includes the right to request, change, or cancel a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order at any time. To do so, the patient must be capable of making healthcare decisions.

Family Participation

Families play an important role in DNR decisions. They can share information about the patient's values, beliefs, and wishes. Families can also support the patient in making informed decisions.

Revocation

A patient can revoke a DNR order at any time. This can be done verbally or in writing. The patient must be capable of making healthcare decisions when revoking the DNR.



DNR Instructions and Medical Procedures

This section clarifies the medical actions affected by this Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Agreement. It details which interventions will be withheld and how medical staff should respond in an emergency.

Withheld Procedures

A DNR order means that if your heart stops beating or you stop breathing, medical staff will not perform resuscitation. Specifically, the following actions will be withheld:

- Chest compressions
- Artificial ventilation
- Intubation
- Defibrillation
- Administration of resuscitation medications

Medical Staff Response

Medical staff will immediately respect a valid DNR order. They will not attempt any resuscitation efforts listed above. However, they will continue to provide comfort care. Other appropriate medical treatments will also continue. The goal is to ensure your comfort and dignity.

How to Complete and Execute a DNR Agreement

Completing a DNR agreement involves several key steps to ensure its validity and effectiveness.

1. **Gather Required Information:** Collect the patient's full name, date of birth, and a detailed description of their current medical condition. The physician's name and contact information are also essential.



2. **Fill Out the DNR Form:** Ensure all sections of the DNR form are accurately completed. This includes patient information, medical condition details, and specific instructions regarding resuscitation.
3. **Obtain Signatures:** The patient, or their legal representative, must sign the agreement. The physician must also sign, attesting to the patient's informed decision. Witness signatures may also be required, depending on jurisdictional requirements.
4. **File and Store the DNR:** The original signed DNR should be filed in the patient's official medical record. Additionally, provide a copy to the patient and any relevant caregivers, especially if the patient resides in a nursing home or travels frequently. This ensures the DNR is readily available when needed.

DNR Agreement Sample Template

This Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Agreement outlines the patient's wish to decline resuscitation efforts. It is requested by the patient or their representative and guides medical staff.

Essential Fields

A complete DNR form requires specific information:

- Patient identification details
- Physician's information
- Signature of the patient or authorized representative
- Witness signatures
- Clearly defined scope of the order

All parties involved should carefully review the document before signing.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

General Questions

What is a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) agreement?



A DNR agreement is a legal document that instructs medical professionals not to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) if your heart stops beating or if you stop breathing. It allows you to refuse life-saving measures in the event of a medical emergency.

Who needs a DNR agreement?

A DNR agreement is appropriate for individuals who have a serious illness, a reduced quality of life, or who simply wish to limit medical interventions at the end of life. It reflects a patient's informed decision about their medical care.

DNR Order Specifics

What happens if I don't have a DNR order?

In the absence of a DNR order, medical personnel are obligated to provide all available life-saving treatments, including CPR.

How often should my DNR order be reviewed?

It is recommended to review and update your DNR order whenever there is a significant change in your health condition or your personal preferences regarding medical treatment. Reviews are also advised as per facility policies or legal guidelines.

Common Concerns and Misconceptions

What are some common misconceptions about DNR orders?

A common misconception is that a DNR order means "do not treat." A DNR order only instructs healthcare providers to withhold CPR. All other appropriate medical treatments will still be provided. Another misconception is that a DNR is permanent and cannot be revoked. A patient can revoke a DNR order at any time, either verbally or in writing.

How is a DNR order enforced?

A properly executed DNR order is a legally binding document. Medical professionals are required to respect your wishes as outlined in the agreement. It's important to openly communicate the existence of your DNR with your family, physicians, and



other relevant healthcare providers. If a DNR order is present, healthcare staff will respect it by not initiating CPR.

Can you provide patient scenarios related to DNR orders?

For example, consider a patient with terminal cancer who doesn't want aggressive measures to prolong life. The patient can execute a DNR so that if their heart or breathing stops, the medical staff will allow a natural death to occur. Another example is an elderly patient with multiple chronic conditions who prefers comfort care over resuscitation. A DNR order ensures their wishes are honored in an emergency.

