Emergency care and treatment plan

Information for patients, relatives and carers
Introduction

This booklet is designed to give you information about the emergency care and treatment plan (ECTP). We hope it will answer some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have at this time. This booklet is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your medical team, but aims to help you understand more about what is discussed.

Your doctors will try to give you the best treatment they can at any time throughout your care. It is important that at all stages of illness there can be open discussion about what medicine can offer and the benefits or harm interventions can do.

An ECTP represents a truthful understanding of the limits of medicine to reverse the underlying progression of a disease which will ultimately result in death.

Remember that doctors are bound to answer your questions honestly. It is for you to ask. Only you know the quality of life which will be acceptable to you within the limitations imposed by illness. Only you can establish your priorities and convey to others the balance between the quality of your life and the amount of time left to live that you feel is appropriate for you.

You are entitled to obtain a second opinion and for your wishes to be respected. You should express those wishes. You have the right to refuse treatment but not to demand interventions which your doctors deem pointless or counter-productive. The aim of the ECTP is to keep the patient as comfortable as possible and with least disturbance.
What is an emergency care and treatment plan?

Care plans are developed by your healthcare team and by you at every stage. The aim is to deliver the care that you need during any time you may spend in hospital, at a hospice and at your home. The ECTP will include your wishes and will be recorded in your medical notes. It will be available for all healthcare professionals to see. If you have chosen a person to speak for you in matters of health should you become unable to do so, please let us know.

What is covered in an emergency care and treatment plan?

The ECTP covers many aspects.

**Intensive care/critical care**

In these settings your whole body is clinically managed. This includes, for example:

- breathing
- feeding
- hydration
- blood pressure
- excretion – kidney and gut functions

Intensive care and critical care are used if someone is suddenly ill and requires short-term help. These settings are not always appropriate when the underlying problem is not curable.
Food and fluid
Most people take small amounts of food and adequate fluid. This should be encouraged. Some people have a feeding tube already in place in which case there may be a discussion about how much nutrition is required towards the end of life.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation
You may have seen cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) dramatised on television. Reality differs in the outcome which is that only five out of 100 attempted resuscitations succeed (success is defined as leaving hospital). In patients with long-term conditions, the rate of success is less than two out of 100.

The procedure is not without injury to the body, even when successful. Intensive care is always required and often ribs are broken or bruised, for example. This is because in order to start the heart, clinicians apply rhythmic and hard pressure to the ribcage, electric shocks are given and a tube must be inserted into the lungs.

As part of the ECTP doctors will discuss and decide if CPR would be possible and of benefit to you in your current state. These are medical decisions but you should request a second opinion at any time if you disagree.

If you wish not to be resuscitated, express your wishes clearly to the members of the team caring for you and to your relatives/friends/carers.

How do I make a comment?
We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any suggestions or comments, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (PALS) on
020 3313 0088 (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte’s & Chelsea hospitals), or 020 3312 7777 (St Mary’s and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at pals@imperial.nhs.uk. The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf. Alternatively, you may wish to express your concerns in writing to:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary’s Hospital, Praed Street, London W2 1NY.

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print, as a sound recording, in Braille, or in alternative languages. Please contact the communications team on 020 3312 5592.

We have a free and premium wi-fi service at each of our five hospitals. For further information please visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk