


**What are your wishes for your health care?** Many of us will face a time when we cannot communicate our wishes due to a sudden or long-term illness. Take the time to plan your path now. Then, flip this page over for frequently asked questions and their answers.

## Where are you in thinking about your advance care plans?

### "I don't know how to think about it, much less discuss it."

Imagining what may happen is tough, even for those with chronic illnesses, but it's important for all of us, even those who are young and in good health now.

 **Start thinking about it now, not in the future, by asking yourself these questions:**

- Who/what brings me meaning?
- What is my purpose in life?
- What are my goals/bucket list?

These answers will help your physician plan care that addresses your goals and brings your life meaning. Be sure your goals are realistic. You may not be able to climb Mt. Everest, but you can reach towards celebrating a milestone wedding anniversary.

 **Realistic or S.M.A.R.T. goals are:**


- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**elevant
- **T**ime-bound




**For more insight, scan the QR code to read the *What Matters to Me* workbook.**

### "I've thought about it, but I haven't selected someone to act for me."

A person who makes decisions when you can't is a surrogate or proxy.

 **Keep in mind a few things when selecting a surrogate and pick someone who:**

- Is an adult, but not your physician
- Cares for you and knows you, your values, wishes and goals
- Can make tough choices under stress
- Won't be too emotionally involved and can separate your wishes from theirs
- Is geographically near or can travel and will check-in at times for updates
- Can handle conflicting views

 **Did you know that states have surrogate priority lists if you haven't appointed someone?** You may not want the surrogates on this list. Choose your own surrogate by appointing someone.

**Scan the QR codes below to learn more about the role of a proxy.**



Choosing a Proxy

Being a Proxy



### "I know what I'd like to happen, but I'm not sure how to proceed."

Addressing your advance care plan can be weird. In-person dialogue may be best, but it can be hard to do.



**Scan the QR codes below to access helpful resources that can assist with difficult conversations:**



Conversation Starter Guide



Art of Dying Well's Talking About Death



Communicating End of Life Wishes

**When talking with others, ask them questions!** Don't be afraid to shelve a conversation and come back to it later, as you may not figure out your plan all at once.

**I've got questions! Great, because we have answers.**

## What is advance care planning?

**Advance care planning is sharing your wishes for the future.**

All patients have the right to make their own medical decisions through informed decision-making with their physician. Patients also have the right to convey decisions ahead of time, in the case they're not able to make decisions on their own in the future.

To do so, you must complete legal documents prior to losing decision-making capacity.

## What are these legal documents? When are they used?

**They are official ways to note your wishes.**

They only become effective if you lose your capacity to make your own decisions or ability to communicate. They help physicians know the medical treatments you want, or don't want, relieving family members of the burden of difficult decisions.

A properly completed document, or advance directive, helps to ensure that your wishes are honored.

## What form are the advance directives?

**They are legal documents stating your future health care wishes.**

The durable power of attorney for health care, or medical power of attorney, allows you to name a person(s) who can make medical decisions for you if you can't. The living will states your wishes about life-sustaining treatment in critical circumstances. Both become effective only if you are unable to make your wishes known.

These can vary by state, so take a closer look for details where you live.



Arkansas



New Mexico



Louisiana



Texas

## Still have questions?

We have more answers.



**Scan the QR codes below to access additional resources.**



Advance Care Planning in Five Steps



More Advance Care Planning FAQ



Advance Care Planning Q&A



Advance Directives Myths and Facts

**Plan your path to help ensure your wishes are honored and relieve a burden on you and your family.**