

MY GUIDE TO ADVANCE CARE PLANNING

One of the most important decisions you need to make is your decision about future medical care. Your choices and your wishes of how you want to be treated and cared for when you can no longer speak or make those decisions for yourself is some of the hardest work you must do. There are many questions in this section for you to reflect on and answer. You may want to do this alone, with a family member, or with someone very close to you. These are your thoughts and feelings, your choices and wishes and therefore there are no wrong answers. Review your choices, thoughts, and feelings periodically to confirm your future healthcare choices. Changing your mind is always acceptable.

Let's begin –

It is when faced with an incurable illness that many people look at what is most important to them, such as relationships, values, events, decisions, and tasks. Many questions will arise that will need to be answered.

Answering the following questions will allow you to communicate your choices and wishes.

As you reflect on these sets of questions, imagine that you are in the last six months of your life:

What in life has given me the most joy?

What in life has made me feel sad or regretful?

What gives my life its meaning and purpose?

What religious, spiritual, or ethical beliefs do I have that I feel guide my thoughts about life and death?
Would I communicate these to my family and friends?

Is forgiveness an important issue for me? If so, with whom will I seek it and how? With whom do I need to give it?

Do I have concerns about my future health or healthcare?

What brings me the most pleasure in living my life?
For example, does listening to music or being outdoors bring me peace?

How important are my surroundings?

| Personal insights for you to consider near the end of your life:

What will help me most to live well at this point in my life?

Are there places or people I would like to visit?

What are the ways I would like to share some time with my family and friends?

What kind of conversations would be comforting to me?

What kind of conversations would distress me?

What do I want my family and friends to know?

When and where will I have those conversations?

| Legal, work, and financial decisions:

Who is my durable power of attorney?

If I am still working, can I delegate some obligations, duties, and projects that need to be completed?

What do I want family and friends to know about working during this time?

Do I have a living trust, a will, or any other legal document?
Where are they kept?

Do I want others to know of any financial arrangements I have made, such as transfers of property, providing for dependents, donating to charitable organizations, or perhaps about any insurance plans?

Where do I keep my information regarding my insurance policies, bank accounts, deeds, titles, stock certificates, etc.?
Does anyone know where they are kept besides me?

| Near the end of your life decisions:

Whom did I choose for my medical power of attorney or healthcare advocate?

Do I have a second choice?

Have I had (or, when will I have) a conversation with them about my choices and wishes?

What does good pain management mean to me?

What are acceptable levels of pain for me?

Under what situations or circumstance would I refuse or stop treatment that might prolong my life?

Would I be interested in having palliative or comfort care services to help with my pain and to keep me comfortable?

If I could no longer swallow, would I want to be “tube fed”?

Do I wish to be medicated but alert?

Would I wish to be sedated if that was the best way to control my pain?

Are there specific treatments or procedures that I would choose never to have again?

Would I be willing to participate in a research study?



| Please check your response and add any additional comments or thoughts you might have to the following questions:

Would I choose to begin or continue treatments, such as tube feedings, breathing tubes, CPR, major surgery, blood transfusions, dialysis, antibiotics, or anything else meant to keep me alive:

If I am no longer able to communicate with my family, friends, or team of doctors?

Yes No Please explain: _____

If I can no longer think for myself?

Yes No Please explain: _____

If I am in a persistent vegetative state (permanently unconscious)?

Yes No Please explain: _____

| At the end of your life:

Are there family members or friends that I would want to write a letter to or make a video for, perhaps for them to open at a later time or event?

If I could choose, where do I want to be when I die?

What would be my second choice?

What would bring me peace and comfort?

Would I prefer to have family and friends around me?

Would I prefer privacy and quiet?

Would I want my family and friends to play music, share stories, pictures, and traditions around me?

What religious or spiritual support do I want as I make my journey towards death?

Would I want to pray with a member of clergy, or be read to from a spiritual or religious text?

Do I wish to be an organ and tissues donor?

Would I like to donate my body for medical science? If so, where?

Do I prefer cremation or burial?

Have I planned and made my final arrangements?

Where would my family find my paperwork stating my choices and wishes?

| These pages are yours and yours alone to help instill a sense of calmness in yourself that your choices and wishes will be respected, honored, and understood. It will also help to bring about confidence and peace of mind, both to you and to the ones who will be making healthcare decisions for you.