

# Advance Care Planning: An Overview

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You have a right to make your own medical decisions at all stages of your adult life. **Advance Care Planning** is a process of discussing, preparing and documenting your wishes and/or preferences. Decisions are based on your personal beliefs and values. The topics listed below can be very difficult to think about and talk about. Advance care planning is an ongoing process of discussion and you don't have to make all your decisions right now, but discussing what you are thinking in regards to the topics below will assist you and your loved ones in caring for you both now and at end of life.

## What to think about:

### Medical Preferences regarding:

- ✓ pain management
- ✓ artificial nutrition and hydration
- ✓ intubation
- ✓ resuscitation
- ✓ dialysis
- ✓ antibiotics
- ✓ any treatments you would or would not want

### What is IMPORTANT TO YOU at end of life?

- ✓ Having family/friends visit often
- ✓ Being pain free
- ✓ Dignity
- ✓ Quality of Life
- ✓ Having closure
- ✓ Religious/Spiritual preferences

### Where do you wish to be cared for specifically at end of life?

- ✓ Home
- ✓ Community

### Who do you trust to make decisions and follow your wishes?

- ✓ Spouse
- ✓ Children
- ✓ Friend

## Who to share with:

**When selecting person(s) to make your decisions you may want to consider choosing someone who is:**

- responsible
- trustworthy to carry out your wishes as expressed
- shares your values and beliefs
- willing to accept responsibility and be available IF decisions need to be made.

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- loved ones (trusted family, friends, children, etc.)
  - physicians
  - social worker
  - lawyer
  - financial advisor

Tips and Reminders:

 Speak openly and honestly about your beliefs, values, hopes and fears.

 Explore your care options and available resources (Community Care Facilities, Hospice, etc)

 You may change your wishes at any time.

 Under state law you will be the person making your decisions if you are determined to have capacity and understanding about the decisions you are making. Two physicians and/or the State will determine your capacity as needed.

 Ask questions to health care professionals about what to expect regarding your health situation.

Questions to consider:

**Intubation (breathing tube):**  
 If I am unable to breathe on my own, I would or would not want a machine to permanently breathe for me.

**Resuscitation:**  
 If I am am ill with no reasonable hope of recovery, I would or would not want chest compressions (CPR) if my heart should stop.

**Antibiotics:**  
 If I am at the end stages of life and I get an infection, I would or would not want IV antibiotics to treat the infection and prolong my life.

**Comfort:**  
 If I am at the end stages of life and was having trouble breathing I would or would not want oxygen for comfort.

**Pain Management:**  
 If I am in the final stages of life and in pain, I would or would not want my physician to provide pain control, using narcotics if necessary.

**Nutrition:**  
 If I am unable to sustain my nutritional needs eating by mouth I would or would not want a tube (PEG) placed in my stomach for feeding.

MORE INFORMATION: Advance Care Planning Web Search

 National Institute on Aging     
  AARP     
  Coalition for Compassionate Care of California