



Advance Directives

A guide to
planning your
health care
wishes.

United
Healthcare

Set up an advance directive now, so your wishes will be known when you can't speak for yourself.

What is an advance directive?

An advance directive describes your medical wishes. It's a written document that outlines the kind of care you may or may not want to have in case you're ever unable to speak or make choices for yourself. Writing down your wishes now can make it easier for your loved ones to follow them later.

An advance directive has two parts:



Living Will

- Indicates what medical care you would or would not want to have.
- Used when you cannot make your own choices.



Durable Health Care Power of Attorney

- Allows you to choose someone to make medical care decisions for you if you're not able to speak for yourself.
- This may be a different person than you choose as your durable power of attorney for finances.
- In some states they may also be called your health care agent or health care proxy.



Additional resources.

- **CaringInfo:** Learn more about advance care planning, hospice and palliative care by visiting [caringinfo.org](https://www.caringinfo.org).
- **Five Wishes:** Get information on the medical, emotional and spiritual aspects of planning at [agingwithdignity.org](https://www.agingwithdignity.org) or by calling **1-888-594-7437**.
- **Eldercare Locator:** Find local service agencies to assist you by calling **1-800-677-1116**.

Selecting your durable health care power of attorney.

Durable health care power of attorney.

The person you assign as your durable health care power of attorney may also be called your health care agent or proxy. You choose this person as someone who will make medical choices for you if you cannot.

Think carefully when choosing this person. If you are unable to make decisions, he or she will:

- Decide where you will get care.
- Talk with health care providers about your health.
- Accept or refuse treatment options.
- Handle situations that aren't in your living will.

You may want to choose a family member or close friend. Make sure it's someone who knows you well and who you trust to make choices that follow and support your wishes. Choose both a primary (first choice) and secondary (second choice) as your health care agent.



Help others speak for you when you're unable to speak for yourself.



Creating your advance directive.

Make sure your advance directive is in the proper legal format. This format varies by state. You may be able to find your state's forms in the following places:

- **Your local hospital:** Call and ask for the hospital's patient representative or Department of Social Services. The forms may also be on the hospital's website.
- **U.S. Living Will Registry®:** You can find forms for each state at [uslwr.com](https://www.uslwr.com). You can also store your living will and other advance care documents online so they can be accessed by health care providers when needed. You can register your documents at [uslwr.com](https://www.uslwr.com) or by calling **1-800-548-9455**. (There may be a fee for registering your documentation.)
- **CaringInfo:** Visit the **Advance Care Planning** section at [caringinfo.org](https://www.caringinfo.org) to find the forms for your state. You can also call the HelpLine at **1-800-658-8898**.

Advance directive information for:

Name:

I have a living will. I have talked with my doctor and family about my medical wishes.

My living will was created on this date:

My living will is located at:

- Registered online with the U.S. Living Will Registry®: Yes: _____ No: _____
- Other location: _____

I have a durable health care power of attorney. He or she is listed below.

Name:

Phone number:

Date:



**Keep this card with you
in your wallet or purse.**

Be sure to update if you change your
durable health care power of attorney
or the location of your living will.

Preparing for your living will.

Know your options.

If you are unable to speak for yourself, your durable health care power of attorney may be asked to make medical support decisions for you. Your living will can help guide these decisions. Decisions may include treatments that may help you live longer, such as:

- **Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR):** This is when your heartbeat and breathing are restarted. Methods include:
 - Chest compressions
 - Medications
 - Forcing air into the lungs
 - Electric shock (also known as defibrillation)

- **Artificial feeding:** Food and fluids are provided through a tube or IV if you can't chew or swallow.
- **Ventilator use:** A tube is put into your throat and air is pumped into your lungs if you cannot breathe on your own.
- **Dialysis:** Wastes and fluids are removed from the body to help you if your kidneys don't work right.

A living will can also include comfort care. These are things that can be done to ease suffering like drugs for pain, anxiety and nausea or providing emotional or spiritual counseling.

Use this chart to help figure out treatment options you would want to include in your living will. Mark the options you would choose in each of these three situations. After filling out the chart, you must include those wishes in your official living will for them to be actionable.

If you were unconscious due to ...	Treatment option(s) you would choose:					
	CPR	Artificial feeding	Ventilator use	Dialysis	Comfort care	No treatment
An unexpected event or health issue. For example, a car accident, stroke or heart attack in which you're likely to recover partly or fully.						
A coma. A state in which you can't answer due to illness or injury. Some level of recovery is possible.						
A vegetative state. A long-term state of being in a coma. Very low chance of full or partial recovery.						

Give it some thought.

Take time to think about what matters to you. Share your thoughts with your friends and family. Ask yourself:

- What are my values and beliefs?
- Where do I wish to get care?
- How can my doctor support my choices?
- What does quality of life mean to me?
- How will choices affect my financial situation?



This brochure is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice or establish an attorney-client relationship. Please consult a qualified legal professional regarding any advance directive, power of attorney or estate planning issues.

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The information provided in this document is for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for your doctor's care. Please discuss with your doctor how the information provided is right for your treatment plan.

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