

## What is an Advance Care Directive?

When you are very ill or injured, you may not be able to make health care choices for yourself. If you are unable to speak for yourself, your doctors may not know what type of care you would prefer. An advance care directive is a legal document. It tells your doctor what care you agree to in advance of this type of situation. With this document, your doctors will know what medical treatment you do/do not want in any situation.

Writing an advance care directive can be challenging. To make the most informed decisions, make sure you:

- Know and understand your treatment options
- Decide future treatment options you may want
- Discuss these choices with your family

### Examples of Advance Care Directives include:

1. Living Will
2. Special Health Care Power of Attorney
3. DNR ( Do not resuscitate)



## 1. Living Wills

A living will explains the care you do or do not want in situations when you were not able to communicate. In it, you can state your wishes about receiving:

- CPR (if your breathing stops or your heart stops beating)
- Feedings through a tube into a vein (IV) or into your stomach
- Extended care on a breathing machine
- Tests, medicines, or surgeries
- Blood transfusions

Each state has specific laws about living wills. You can find out about the laws in your state from your doctor. You can also check with the state law organization and most hospitals.

### REMINDER:

- A living will is not the same as a last will and testament after a person's death.
- You are not able to name someone to make health care decisions for you in a living will.



## 2. Power of Attorney

A special Health Care Power of Attorney is a legal document. It allows you to name a health care agent or proxy to make health care decisions for you when you are unable. It does NOT give power to ANYONE to make legal or financial decisions for you.



### 3. DNR (Do Not Resuscitate)

A Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order is a document that tells health care providers not to do CPR if your breathing stops or your heart stops beating. Your doctor talks to you, the proxy, or family about this choice. The doctor indicates your preferences on your medical chart. Verbal instructions are your choices about care that you tell health care providers or family members.

#### REMINDER:

Fill out an organ donation card and carry it in your wallet. Keep a second card with your important papers. You can find out about organ donation from your doctor. You can also have this choice listed on your driver's license.

#### Helpful Tips:

1. Write your living will or health care power of attorney according to your state's laws.
  2. Give copies to your family members, health care providers, and health care agent.
  3. Carry a copy with you in your wallet or the glove compartment of your car.
  4. Take a copy with you if you are in a hospital.
- Tell all medical staff involved in your care about these documents.



You can change your decisions at any time. Be sure to tell everyone involved -- family members, proxies, and health care providers -- if you make changes to your advance directive or living will.