



Advance Directives

What You Should Know.

An Advance Directive allows you to make legal decisions regarding your future healthcare in the event that you are unable to communicate your wishes due to a disease or severe injury.

The following information is adapted from the National Institute on Aging (NIA) but does not take the place of a healthcare provider or legal counsel. Talk to your health care provider to determine if an advance directive is right for you.



Where Should You Start?

Think about what health conditions you're living with right now. What emergencies could possibly occur in the future based on these conditions? If you aren't sure, discuss with your doctor. They can give you a better idea of the medical problems you may face. In fact, they are required to inform you of these risks. Also, be sure to think about situations you may not be expecting, such as an accident.

Now that you've considered what emergencies may occur, think about how you would like to be treated in these scenarios. You should think about which is most important to you: prolonging life or quality of life? These values will influence what decisions you make about your future care.

When Is An Advance Directive Used?

Advance Directives are used when someone is unable to communicate their own wishes. This can be due to the following:

- Debilitating disease
- Permanent Coma
- Head Injury Resulting in Brain Damage
- Cardiac Arrest

Decisions about Emergency Treatments

Several measure may be taken to prolong life in certain situations. Advance directives can help you make decisions about:

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

CPR restores heartbeat by breathing air into a patient's lungs and performing chest compressions, sometimes causing broken ribs or collapsed lungs. A defibrillator, which uses electric shock, may also be used.

Ventilators

Ventilators are machines that help you breathe via a tube that is put through the throat. These can be uncomfortable and affect your ability to communicate.

Artificial Nutrition or Hydration

Nutrition is provided via a tube that is inserted through the nose and into the stomach. Fluids are delivered through an IV port.

Comfort Care

Comfort care includes anything that is done to make life a bit easier, such as receiving counseling, limiting medication, and managing uncomfortable symptoms.

Dialysis

Dialysis is a treatment used to clean the blood when a patient's kidneys have failed.

Types of Advance Directives

Living Wills

Living wills are used to communicate your wishes to your doctors if you are dying or permanently unconscious. You can express which procedures you want and do not want under certain circumstances with this document.

Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care

This legal document identifies a healthcare proxy who is able to make medical decisions for you when you cannot make them for yourself. This should be someone you know well, are comfortable with, and who lines up with your values.

It may be a good idea to obtain both of these types of advance directives to ensure your wishes are expressed as clearly as possible.

Creating An Advance Directive

Once you have checked your local laws and discussed your decisions with your healthcare provider, family, and chosen proxy (if applicable), obtain the necessary legal forms and put your directives in writing. Check to see if your area requires this document to be done in the presence of a witness or if it needs to be notarized. Once you are finished, give a copy to all involved parties and keep one for your records.

Always remember:

- Your advance directives will only be used in a situation where you are unable to make a decision yourself, such as severe disease or injury.
- You can always change your advance directives. In fact, you should review them regularly to make sure they still align with your wishes.

Other Issues To Plan For

Make sure your advance directive details your wishes about the following:

Do-Not-Resuscitate (DNR)

A DNR instructs your physician not to attempt CPR or other procedures if your heart or breathing stops. A DNR must be signed by a physician.

Organ Donation

Directions for donating specific organs or your entire body.

Other Treatments and Procedures

You have the ability to request or refuse any medical treatments.

What Happens If I Do Not Have An Advance Directive?

If you do not have an advance directive, the state will choose someone to make decisions for you such as a spouse, parent, or child (if they are an adult) or another person who will make decisions in your best interest.

Adapted from NIH Publication NO. 18-AG-8039

PENTEC HEALTH, INC. PATIENT INFORMATION REGARDING ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

An "Advance Directive" is a term that refers to your instructions about your future medical care and treatment. You are not required under our policies or under your state laws to have an Advance Directive. However, if you do have a written Advance Directive, you must provide us with a copy of your executed Advance Directive. Also, if at any time during your treatment you change or update your Advance Directive, you must provide us with a copy of the changed or updated Advance Directive.

If you provide us with a copy of your Advance Directive, we will keep a copy with your treatment chart.

We will comply with the terms of your Advance Directive in accordance with the requirements of your state laws.

We will not condition or otherwise restrict the care that we provide to you based on whether you have an Advance Directive.

We cannot provide legal advice on any Advance Directive. If you need legal advice regarding an Advance Directive, you should consult your attorney.

More information about Advance Directives can be obtained from your physician.



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