

Advance Directives

What kind of medical care would you want if you were too ill or hurt to express your wishes? Advance directives are legal documents that allow you to convey your decisions about end-of-life care ahead of time.

They provide a way for you to communicate your wishes to family, friends and health care professionals, and to avoid confusion later on.



A living will tells how you feel about care intended to sustain life. You can accept or refuse medical care.

There are many issues to address, including

- The use of dialysis and breathing machines
- If you want to be resuscitated if breathing or heartbeat stops
- Tube feeding
- Organ or tissue donation

A durable power of attorney for health care is a document that names your health care proxy. Your proxy is someone you trust to make health decisions if you are unable to do so.

Text is public domain by MedlinePlus (www.medlineplus.gov) This handout, created by Healthy Roads Media (www.healthyroadsmedia.org), can be freely distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/us>)

Last reviewed 2011