Making a Medical Plan During COVID-19

We are all in this together. You can do your part by making a medical plan. This plan can help you, your family, friends, and your medical providers.

**If you need help with other needs, such as food or housing call 415-355-6700 or the statewide hotline 833-544-2374**

Plan for Medications:

- Make a list of your medications and keep it on hand
- Look ahead and call your clinic or hospital if you need a refill
- Call your pharmacy to see if your medicines can be sent to your home

Plan for a Hospital Visit / Pack a ‘Go Bag’:

Bring what you may need from home. Family and friends may not be able to visit.

- **Papers and information:**
  - Phone numbers for your medical decision maker
    - Write it down in case medical providers cannot access your contacts
  - List of medications (or better yet, your pill bottles)
  - Your advance directive or medical wishes
  - Plans for your pets or bills while you are away

- **Equipment:**
  If you use any of the following, plan to bring them with you:
  - Glasses, hearing aids, dentures, mobility devices
    - These are often lost in hospitals, so guard them
  - Phone, tablet and/or computer and their chargers
    - This can help you stay connected to family and friends
  - Ear plugs, sleep mask, toothbrush, books, or clothes from home
  - Bring food, water, and medication you may need for a long wait

Plan for Your Medical Wishes: Keep this information on hand

1. **Choose a medical decision maker**
   - This person will speak for you if you cannot speak for yourself
     - They can make sure your doctors know about the care you want
     - Keep their phone number on hand
     - If able, choose a back-up medical decision maker
   - A good medical decision maker is someone who:
     - Can talk to the doctors for you in person or by phone
     - You trust to follow your wishes and what is best for you
   - Let your medical decision maker know they were chosen
     - This website can show you how: prepareforyourcare.org

2. **Share Your Wishes:** This is MOST important
   - What is most important in your life? Family, pets, hobbies, etc.?
• If you know what you want for your medical care, share this now
• Talk with your family, friends, and medical providers about the care you want
  o This website can show you how: prepareforyourcare.org
• You can share what you want by phone and/or a selfie video
  o You can also talk to others by video call: Click here to learn more

3. Consider an advance directive. This form allows you to name your decision maker and write down what you want for your medical care.
• If you have an advance directive, find it, review it, and share it
• To get a form go here: https://prepareforyourcare.org/advance-directive
  o It is OK if you can’t sign it or get witnesses right now
    ▪ Reading it can still help you learn a lot about your wishes
    ▪ Filling out parts of it can still help your family and providers
  o You can scan/fax (the most secure), email, or even send pictures of the form from your cell phone to those you trust

Plan for Your Pets:

• Choose someone who could take care of your pets if needed
• Call your pet store as they may deliver pet food and supplies to your home
• If you have questions about your pets or need help, call:
  o The San Francisco SPCA 415-554-3000
  o San Francisco Animal Care and Control: 415-554-6364

Plan for Your Money and Bills:

• Choose someone who could help with your money and bills if needed
• To make sure this is safe, you can call for legal help at 1-800-474-1116 or visit lawhelp.org
  o Lawyers can also help if you do not have someone to help with bills
  o Some of these legal services may be free
  o Beware of scams: Do not pay for services your doctor did not order
    ▪ Do not give strangers information about your money
    ▪ If you get Social Security, your money will still come.

COVID-19 planning may be different from other planning you are used to:
• You may not be able to talk to your regular doctor in person, only by phone
• Many people are getting very sick and going to the hospital
• If you need to go to the hospital:
  o Your family may not be allowed to visit you. Remember your phone and charger.
  o You may be taken to a different hospital than where you get your care
• People with COVID-19 may get so sick they need a breathing machine (ventilator) for many weeks in the ICU. They cannot talk when on the machine.
  o Even with a breathing machine, many people will not survive
  o For people who survive, their health and quality of life may never be the same

To learn about COVID: Go to this San Francisco website, the CDC website or watch this video
To learn about medical decisions, such as a breathing machine or CPR go here
To learn about help for food, shelter, or bills go here for California or this national resource