A program to help you make medical decisions for yourself and others

**Step 1** Choose a Medical Decision Maker

Choose someone you trust to help make decisions for you in case you become too sick to make your own decisions.

**A good decision maker will:**
- ask doctors questions
- respect your wishes

If there is no one to choose right now, do Steps 2, 4, and 5.

**How to say it:**

“If I get sick in the future and cannot make my own decisions, would you work with my doctors and help make medical decisions for me?”

**OR**

“I do not want to make my own medical decisions. Would you talk to the doctors and help make medical decisions for me now and in the future?”

**Step 2** Decide What Matters Most in Life

This can help you decide on medical care that is right for you.

**Five questions**
can help you decide what matters for your medical care:

1. **What is most important in life?**
   - Friends?
   - Family?
   - Religion?

2. **What experiences have you had with serious illness or death?**

3. **What brings you quality of life?**
   - Quality of life is different for each person. Some people are willing to live through a lot for a chance of living longer. Others know certain things would be hard on their quality of life.

4. **If you were very sick, what would be most important to you:**
   - To live as long as possible even if you think you have poor quality of life?
   - Or, to try treatments for a period of time, but stop if you are suffering?
   - Or, to focus on quality of life and comfort, even if your life is shorter?

5. **Have you changed your mind about what matters most in your life over time?**

www.prepareforyourcare.org
**Step 3  Choose Flexibility for Your Decision Maker**

*Flexibility* allows your decision maker to change your prior decisions if doctors think something else is better for you at that time.

**How to say it:**

**Total Flexibility:**

“I trust you to work with my doctors. It is OK if you have to change my prior decisions if something is better for me at that time.”

**Some Flexibility:**

“It is OK if you have to change my prior decisions. But, there are some decisions that I never want you to change. These decisions are…”

**No Flexibility:**

“Follow my wishes exactly, no matter what.”

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**Step 4  Tell Others About Your Medical Wishes**

This will help you get the medical care you want.

**How to say it:**

**To your decision maker and medical care team:**

“This is what is most important in my life and for my medical care…”

**To your medical care team and family and friends:**

“I chose this person to be my decision maker and I want to give them (TOTAL, SOME, or NO) flexibility to make decisions for me.”

*Your medical care team can help you put your medical wishes on an advance directive form.*

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**Step 5  Ask the Medical Care Team Questions**

- **Write down questions ahead of time.**
- **Bring someone with you.**
- **Tell medical providers at the start of the visit if you have questions.**

**How to say it:**

**Ask the medical care team about:**

- **Benefits** – the good things that could happen
- **Risks** – the bad things that could happen
- **Options** for different kinds of treatment
- **Most important:** “What will my life be like after the treatment? Will it help my quality of life?”

**Make sure you understand:**

“What I’m hearing you say is…”

“Is this right?”

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Go to PREPAREforyourcare.org to get easy to read advance directives. These forms allow you to put your wishes in writing.