

# Virginia Advance Health Care Directive

This form lets you have a say about how you want to be cared for if you cannot speak for yourself.

This form has 3 parts:

## Part 1 Choose a medical decision maker, Page 3



A medical decision maker is a person who can make health care decisions for you if you are not able to make them yourself.

This person will be your advocate.

They are also called a health care agent, proxy, or surrogate.

## Part 2 Make your own health care choices, Page 7

This form lets you choose the kind of health care you want. This way, those who care for you will not have to guess what you want if you are not able to tell them yourself.

## Part 3 Sign the form, Page 13

The form must be signed before it can be used.



You can fill out Part 1, Part 2, or both.

Fill out **only** the parts you want. Always sign the form in Part 3.

2 witnesses need to sign on Page 14.

## **This is a legal form that lets you have a voice in your health care.**

It will let your family, friends, and medical providers know how you want to be cared for if you cannot speak for yourself.

### **What should I do with this form?**

- Please share this form with your family, friends, and medical providers.
- Please make sure copies of this form are placed in your medical record at all the places you get care.

### **What if I have questions about the form?**

- It is OK to skip any part of this form if you have questions or do not want to answer.
- Ask your doctors, nurses, social workers, family, or friends to help.
- Lawyers can help too. This form does not give legal advice.

### **What if I want to make health care choices that are not on this form?**

- On Page 12, you can write down anything else that is important to you.

### **When should I fill out this form again?**

- If you change your mind about your health care choices
- If your health changes
- If your medical decision maker changes



If your spouse is your medical decision maker, and you or your spouse file for divorce, your spouse will no longer be your decision maker. If you or your medical decision maker file for custody of your child or children, that person will no longer be your decision maker.

Give the new form to your medical decision maker and medical providers. Destroy old forms.

**Share this form and your choices with your family, friends, and medical providers.**

# Part 1

## Choose your medical decision maker

**Your medical decision maker can make health care decisions for you if you are not able to make them yourself.**

**A good medical decision maker is a family member or friend who:**

- is 18 years of age or older
- can talk to you about your wishes
- can be there for you when you need them
- you trust to follow your wishes and do what is best for you
- you trust to know your medical information
- is not afraid to ask doctors questions and speak up about your wishes



**What will happen if I do not choose a medical decision maker?**

If you are not able to make your own decisions, your doctors may turn to family or a judge to make decisions for you. This person may not know what you want.

**By signing this form, you allow your medical decision maker to choose these things for you:**

- doctors, nurses, social workers, caregivers
- hospitals, clinics, nursing homes
- medications, tests, or treatments
- who can look at your medical information



## By signing this form, you allow your medical decision maker to:

### Start or stop life support or medical treatments, such as:

- **CPR or cardiopulmonary resuscitation**

cardio = heart • pulmonary = lungs • resuscitation = try to bring back

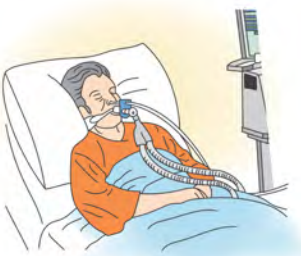
**This may involve:**

- pressing hard on your chest to try to keep your blood pumping
- electrical shocks to try to jump start your heart
- medicines in your veins



- **Breathing machine or ventilator**

The machine pumps air into your lungs and tries to breathe for you. You are not able to talk when you are on the machine.



- **Dialysis**

A machine that tries to clean your blood if your kidneys stop working.

- **Feeding Tube**

A tube used to try to feed you if you cannot swallow. The tube can be placed through your nose down into your throat and stomach. It can also be placed by surgery into your stomach.



- **Blood and water transfusions (IV)**

To put blood and water into your body.

- **Surgery**

- **Medicines**



\*How well these treatments work will depend on your health and your age. Ask the medical care team about **Quality of Life** after these treatments.

## End of life decisions your medical decision maker can make:

- call in a religious or spiritual leader
- decide if you die at home or in the hospital
- decide about autopsy or organ donation

**By signing this form, you allow your medical decision maker to:**

- agree to, refuse, or withdraw any life support or medical treatment if you are not able to speak for yourself

If there are decisions you do not want them to make, write them here:

**Write the name of your medical decision maker.**

**#1: I want this person to make my medical decisions if I am not able to make my own:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
first name                      last name                      relationship

\_\_\_\_\_  
phone #1                      phone #2                      email address

\_\_\_\_\_  
address                      city                      state                      zip code

**#2: If the first person cannot do it, then I want this person to make my medical decisions:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
first name                      last name                      relationship

\_\_\_\_\_  
phone #1                      phone #2                      email address

\_\_\_\_\_  
address                      city                      state                      zip code

If you want, you can write why you chose your #1 and #2 decision makers on page 5.

Write down anyone you would NOT want to help make medical decisions for you.

If your family makes decisions as a group, who do you want in the group? Your medical decision maker(s) on page 5 will still have the final say.

## How strictly do you want your medical decision maker to follow your wishes if you are not able to speak for yourself?

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

Prior decisions may be wishes you wrote down or talked about with your medical decision maker. You can write your wishes in Part 2 of this form.

Check the **one** choice you most agree with.

**Total Flexibility:** It is OK for my decision maker to change any of my medical decisions if my doctors think it is best for me at that time.

**Some Flexibility:** It is OK for my decision maker to change some of my decisions if the doctors think it is best. But, these wishes I NEVER want changed:

**No Flexibility:** I want my decision maker to follow my medical wishes exactly. It is NOT OK to change my decisions, even if the doctors recommend it.

If you want, you can write why you feel this way.

To make your own health care choices, go to Part 2 on Page 7. If you are done, you must sign this form on Page 13.

Please share your wishes with your family, friends, and medical providers.

# Part 2

## Make your own health care choices

Fill out only the questions you want.

### How do you prefer to make medical decisions?

Some people prefer to make their own medical decisions. Some people prefer input from others (family, friends, and medical providers) before they make a decision. And, some people prefer other people make decisions for them.

**Please note:** Medical providers cannot make decisions for you. They can only give information to help with decision making.

### How do you prefer to make medical decisions?

I prefer to make medical decisions on my own without input from others.

I prefer to make medical decisions only after input from others.

I prefer to have other people make medical decisions for me.

If you want, you can write why you feel this way, and who you want input from.

### What matters most in life? Quality of life differs for each person.

**What is most important in your life?** Check as many as you want.

Your family or friends \_\_\_\_\_

Your pets \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies, such as gardening, hiking, and cooking

Your hobbies \_\_\_\_\_

Working or volunteering \_\_\_\_\_

Caring for yourself and being independent

Not being a burden on your family

Religion or spirituality: Your religion \_\_\_\_\_

Something else \_\_\_\_\_

**What brings your life joy? What are you most looking forward to in life?**



**What matters most for your medical care? This differs for each person.**

For some people, the main goal is to be kept alive as long as possible even if:

- They have to be kept alive on machines and are suffering
- They are too sick to talk to their family and friends

For other people, the main goal is to focus on quality of life and being comfortable.

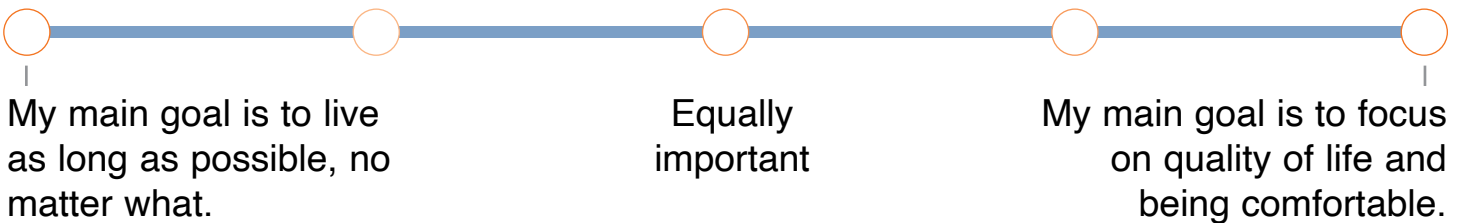
- These people would prefer a natural death, and not be kept alive on machines

Other people are somewhere in between. **What is important to you?**

Your goals may differ today in your current health than at the end of life.

**TODAY, IN YOUR CURRENT HEALTH**

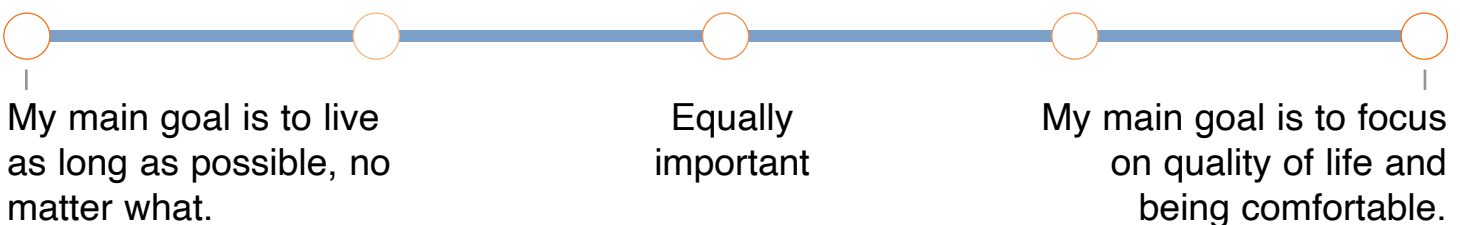
**Check one choice along this line to show how you feel today, in your current health.**



**If you want, you can write why you feel this way.**

**AT THE END OF LIFE**

**Check one choice along this line to show how you would feel if you were so sick that you may die soon.**



**If you want, you can write why you feel this way.**



## Quality of life differs for each person at the end of life. What would be most important to you?

### AT THE END OF LIFE

Some people are willing to live through a lot for a chance of living longer.

Other people know that certain things would be very hard on their quality of life.

- Those things may make them want to focus on comfort rather than trying to live as long as possible.

**At the end of life,** which of these things would be very hard on your quality of life?

Check as many as you want.

Being in a coma and not able to wake up or talk to my family and friends

Not being able to live without being hooked up to machines

Not being able to think for myself, such as severe dementia

Not being able to feed, bathe, or take care of myself

Not being able to live on my own, such as in a nursing home

Having constant, severe pain or discomfort

Something else \_\_\_\_\_



**OR,** I am willing to live through all of these things for a chance of living longer.

If you want, you can write why you feel this way.

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What experiences have you had with serious illness or with someone close to you who was very sick or dying?

- If you want, you can write down what went well or did not go well, and why.

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If you were dying, where would you want to be?

at home

in the hospital

either

I am not sure

What else would be important, such as food, music, pets, or people you want around you?

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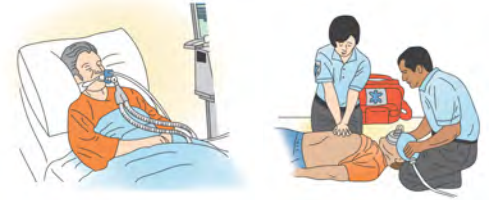
## How do you balance quality of life with medical care?

Sometimes illness and the treatments used to try to help people live longer can cause pain, side effects, and the inability to care for yourself.

Please **read this whole page** before making a choice.

**AT THE END OF LIFE**, some people are willing to live through a lot for a chance of living longer. Other people know that certain things would be very hard on their quality of life.

Life support treatment can be CPR, a breathing machine, feeding tubes, dialysis, or transfusions.



\*How well these treatments work will depend on your health and your age. Ask your medical care team, “What will my Quality of Life be like after these treatments?”

Check the **one** choice you most agree with.

If you were so sick that you may die soon, what would you prefer?

**Try all life support treatments** that my doctors think might help. I want to **stay on life support** treatments even if there is little hope of getting better or living a life I value.

Do a **trial of life support treatments** that my doctors think might help. But, I **DO NOT** want to **stay on life support** treatments if the treatments do not work and there is little hope of getting better or living a life I value.

**I do not want life support treatments**, and I want to focus on being comfortable. I prefer to have a **natural death**.

Would these wishes change if you were pregnant?

Yes

No

What else should your medical providers and decision maker know about this choice? What else would be important to you? You can write more on page 12.

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**Your decision maker may be asked about organ donation and autopsy after you die. Please tell us your wishes.**

## ORGAN DONATION

**Some people decide to donate their organs or body parts.  
What do you prefer?**

I **want** to donate my organs or body parts.

Which organ or body part do you want to donate?

Any organ or body part

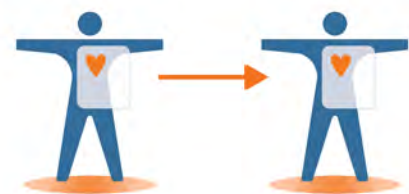
Only \_\_\_\_\_

I **do not** want to donate my organs or body parts.

What else should your medical providers and medical decision maker know about donating your organs or body parts?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## AUTOPSY

**An autopsy can be done after death to find out why someone died.  
It is done by surgery. It can take a few days.**

I **want** an autopsy.

I **do not** want an autopsy.

I **only** want an autopsy if there are questions about my death.



## RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL WISHES

**If you want, you can write down any religious or spiritual wishes.**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**OPTIONAL: How do you prefer to get medical information?**

Some people may want to know all of their medical information. Other people may not.

**If you had a serious illness, would you want your doctors and medical providers to tell you how sick you are or how long you may have to live?**

Yes, I would want to know this information.

No, I would not want to know. Please talk with my decision maker instead.

**If you want, you can write why you feel this way.**

\* Talk to your medical providers so they know how you want to get information.

**What else should your medical providers and medical decision maker(s) know about you and your choices for medical care?**

Here are just a few examples:

- Do you have religious or spiritual beliefs that guide your medical care?
- What if you get memory loss or dementia, are no longer safe to drive, or are no longer safe to live at home?

How would you want your medical care team, family, and friends to talk with you about these things? What would you be worried about? What would be important to you?

- If you were in the hospital, who could help with your bills or pets? **Note:** To give this person legal power to help with your money, bills, pets, and things you own, you also need to write this in other legal forms. See [PlanforClarity.org](http://PlanforClarity.org).

**You can write more about your choices on the next page.**

**What else should your medical providers and medical decision maker(s) know about you and your choices for medical care?**

# Part 3

## Sign the form



### Before this form can be used, you must:

- sign this form if you are 18 years of age or older
- have two witnesses who can watch you sign this form

### Sign your name and write the date.

sign your name

today's date

print your first name

print your last name

date of birth

address

city

state

zip code

## Witnesses

### Before this form can be used you must have 2 witnesses sign the form.

#### Your witnesses must:

- be 18 years of age or older
- see you sign the form



Witnesses need to sign their names on Page 14.

**Have your witnesses sign their names and write the date.**

By signing, I promise that \_\_\_\_\_ signed this form  
while I watched. (the person named on Page 13)

They were thinking clearly and were not forced to sign it.

I also promise that:

- I am 18 years of age or older

**Witness #1**

\_\_\_\_\_ sign your name \_\_\_\_\_ date

\_\_\_\_\_ print your first name \_\_\_\_\_ print your last name

\_\_\_\_\_ address \_\_\_\_\_ city \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code

**Witness #2**

\_\_\_\_\_ sign your name \_\_\_\_\_ date

\_\_\_\_\_ print your first name \_\_\_\_\_ print your last name

\_\_\_\_\_ address \_\_\_\_\_ city \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code

**You are now done with this form.**

**Share this form with your family, friends, and medical providers. Talk with them about your medical wishes. You can also ask them to help make copies and get the form into your medical record.**

**To learn more go to [www.prepareforyourcare.org](http://www.prepareforyourcare.org)**