



Advance Care Planning – Frequently Asked Questions

What is advance care planning?

Advance care planning is a process in which you reflect on your values and wishes, and let others know your future health and personal care preferences in the event you become incapable of consenting to or refusing treatment or other care.

Why should I have an Advance Care Plan?

Having a clear plan in place reduces stress and confusion for you, your loved ones and your health care providers at a very sensitive, urgent time. An Advance Care Plan (ACP) gives you and the ones looking after you clarity and peace of mind.

Who speaks for me when I can't speak for myself?

In your Advance Care Plan, you choose a Substitute Decision Maker (SDM) who will speak for you and make decisions for you when you cannot. You can choose whoever you want. Discuss your Advance Care Plan with them, other close family and friends, and your health care providers. Make sure your close family, friends, and health care providers know about your plan, and who your SDM is.

What's in my Advance Care Plan?

Your Advance Care Plan outlines your beliefs, values, and preferences when it comes to how you want to live or die. If you are approaching the end of life, it may also outline your understanding of your condition and your prognosis, and what you value most (i.e. as much time as possible with family, living with as little pain as possible). Your health care providers use this information to develop treatment options and goals of care that best suit your wishes.

Doesn't my doctor have the final say about my care?

Your doctor can provide valuable advice to you and your family about treatment, but needs to know about your beliefs, concerns and wishes to provide you with the care you want. Everyone has the right to make decisions about their own health care.

Can my Advance Care Plan change?

You can change your ACP as often as you like. Just make sure that your Substitute Decision Maker is aware of your wishes and has a copy of your most recent written document(s).

What happens in an emergency where I can't communicate and the hospital doesn't know about my Substitute Decision Maker?

Make sure that your Substitute Decision Maker and your doctor have a copy of any written documents and that others know who will act as your Substitute Decision Maker should an emergency occur. Visit www.advancecareplanning.ca to download a wallet card which can be used to document the name and contact information of your Substitute Decision Maker in case of an emergency.

How do I get started?

Visit www.advancecareplanning.ca. There you will find lots of resources, including a kit to help you develop your own personal Advance Care Plan.