

YOUR DOCTOR

It is important to talk with your health care provider about your illness, your goals and wishes, and planning for the future. This is an important part of the care all patients receive, and is called advance care planning.

Health care providers prefer to

talk about this when patients are doing okay. It is best not to wait until there is a crisis. It is also a good time to talk even if you are healthy.

Patients who think about what is important to them often have more peace of mind and feel in control of their situation.



Talking about the future will not change your ongoing care!

It will not change the plans you have made so far about your treatment, unless you want to change those plans. Your health care provider will keep providing the best possible care for you.



BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT

Prepare by thinking about these things:

- What kind of medical treatment would you want *or not want* if you were suddenly ill or injured?
- Who will speak for you if you cannot speak for yourself?
- What would you like to know about your illness and what is likely ahead?
- What kind of information would help you make decisions about your future?
- What is most important for you to have a good quality of life?
- What fears do you have related to your illness or future health?
- What would it be like to share these thoughts with your family?

If you have a Health Care Power of Attorney form, or a Declaration of Nature Death or Living will, bring a copy when you talk to your doctor.

BRING SOMEONE IMPORTANT

You can choose to bring the person who is your Health Care Power of Attorney, a pastor, friend, family members, or anyone else to your appointment so they can be a part of the conversation. Just let your provider know if you would like others to be included.

YOUR WISHES MAY CHANGE

This is the beginning of an ongoing dialogue. You may have other questions or concerns about the future. Your provider is here to support you and answer your questions so you can make informed decisions.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Thinking and talking about your wishes gives you more control over the care you get. It helps prepare your loved ones to make decisions for you if you cannot make them for yourself. Knowing what treatments you want will ease the burden of making hard decisions for you if it ever comes to that.