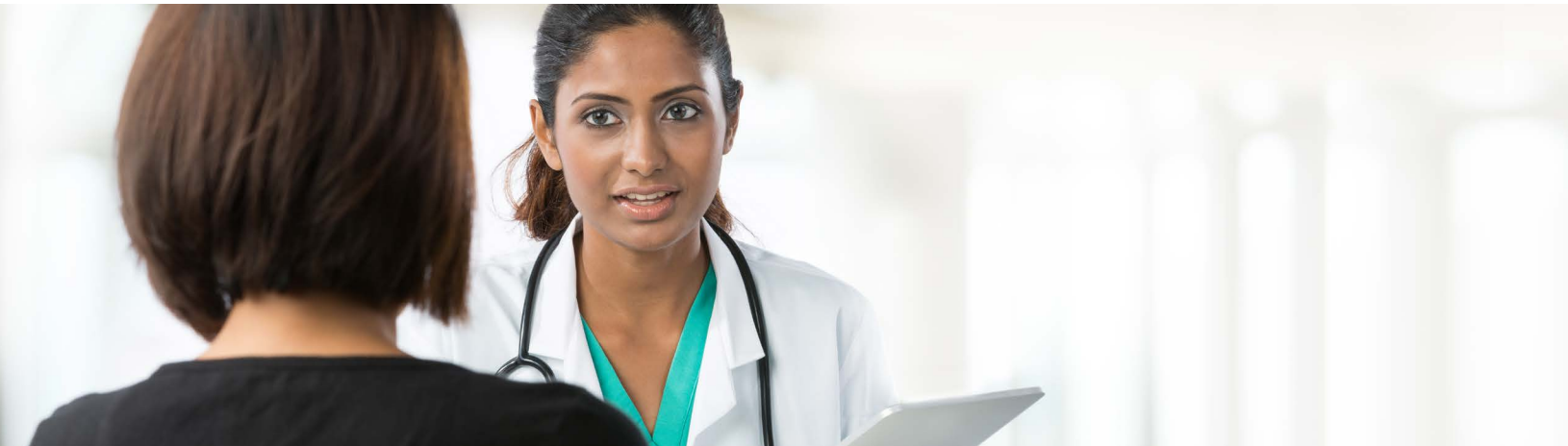


# A guide for talking with your healthcare provider about advance care planning



You have probably asked your healthcare provider questions about your current health or healthcare treatments. But it's also important to ask about the care you will get should you become unable to make healthcare choices.

In fact, it's never too soon to ask how an **advance care plan** can help you and your loved ones.

## What is an advance care plan?

An **advance care plan** is a legal document that speaks for you if you can't speak for yourself. Sometimes it's called an *advance directive*. An advance care plan usually includes the following:

- The name of the person who can speak on your behalf with your doctors (called your healthcare decision maker)
- A list of any medical treatments or services that you do or do not want
- Other wishes, such as wanting to be at home or in a hospital, or having your family with you

## How can my healthcare provider help me with advance care planning?

Your doctor can help you with making decisions by talking to you about:

- Your overall health now
- Health issues that could someday affect you
- Different types of treatments that may be right for you
- What your decisions may mean for you in the future

### Using this guide

- This guide can help you during conversations with your healthcare provider
- You can use the sample questions on the back during visits with your doctor or healthcare team
- It is helpful to have someone go with you to write down answers to your questions, so you can review the notes at home later

# Asking the right questions to help build your advance care plan

Consider the following questions as you talk to your healthcare provider about advance care planning and your treatment options



## At regular checkup appointments

- How can advance care planning help me and my loved ones?
- Can you suggest any resources to help me create an advance care plan?
- How often should I update my advance care plan?
- Can I keep my advance care plan on file with your office (or at this healthcare center or hospital)?



## At diagnosis

- What is my diagnosis? How serious is my condition?
- How could my condition affect my daily living?
- How can I improve my symptoms (such as pain, nausea, depression) so I will feel better?
- What are my current treatment options? Are there any other potential health problems I should know about?



## At follow-up visits

- Has my condition improved or gotten worse? Why? What should I expect in the future?
- What are my treatment options if I am no longer able to eat or drink by mouth?
- What is hospice care? What is palliative care? Are these options available for me?
- What is the difference between a do-not-resuscitate (DNR) order and a do-not-intubate (DNI) order?
- How can I update my advance care plan? Whom should I tell if I make changes in my advance care plan?

If there is something you don't understand, be sure to ask your doctor or healthcare provider. Remember, the reason you are asking questions is to learn as much as possible before you start making or updating your advance care plan.

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**Information should not replace  
the directions and advice of  
the healthcare provider.**

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