

Additional Resources

Caring Connections - www.caringinfo.org or 1-800-658-8898

Caring Connections offers free, state-specific Advance Directives for all 50 states and DC that meet the legal requirements for each state. They also have resources available for planning ahead, caring for someone, living with an illness, and grieving a loss.

Idaho End-of-Life Coalition - www.idahoendoflifecoalition.wildapricot.org

Idaho End-of-Life Coalition is made up of professional associations and organizations, citizen advocacy groups, concerned individuals, health care facilities, educational institutions, agencies, and local end-of-life coalitions. In collaboration, coalition participants provide knowledge, tools and mechanisms to promote broad-based, compassionate palliative care for terminally ill and dying people and the frail elderly who are completing life.

National Healthcare Decisions Day (NHDD) - www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org/resources.htm

NHDD is an initiative to encourage patients to express their wishes regarding healthcare and for providers and facilities to respect those wishes. This information on this site is provided solely for educational or general illustration purposes and does not create a business or professional service relationship.

Idaho State Attorney General - www2.state.id.us/ag/living_wills/index.htm

Idaho law provides for individuals to ensure that their wishes about their healthcare are carried out in the event they become incapacitated and are not able to speak for themselves. Generally, there are two kinds of Advance Directives. The first is called a Living Will, and the second is called a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care. You should not execute an Advanced Directive without having first thought about end-of-life issues, considered your personal values, and discussed your end of life wishes with your family, physicians, attorney, and clergy.

The Elder Law Group of Ahrens DeAnglei Law Group - www.idahoelderlaw.com

Healthcare, legal, and financial planning are crucial in making sure that your needs are taken care of in order to protect your quality of care and quality of life. Certain questions should be considered on an individual basis by an attorney whose practice is concentrated in Life Care Planning, which is a combination of Elder Law, Estate Planning and Elder Care Coordination. Sission & Sission offers an initial consultation with Peter C. Sisson, Board Certified Elder Law Attorney or call their office for the date of our next free public seminar to learn more about how Life Care Planning can work for you and your family.

Oregon POLST - www.polst.org

The Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) Paradigm Program is designed to improve the quality of care people receive at the end of life. It is based on effective communication of patient wishes, documentation of medical orders and a promise by healthcare professionals to honor these wishes.

Five Wishes - www.agingwithdignity.org or 1-888-594-7437

Five Wishes lets your family and doctors know:

- ♥ Who you want to make health care decisions for you when you can't make them.
- ♥ The kind of medical treatment you want or don't want.
- ♥ How comfortable you want to be.
- ♥ How you want people to treat you.
- ♥ What you want your loved ones to know.

If you would like to obtain a copy of Five Wishes (Living Will) call 1-888-594-7437 to purchase a copy. Ask about their "Family Package."

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HEART to HEART CONVERSATIONS



Heart to Heart Conversations is a tool to help you have the difficult conversations about end-of-life wishes. Many times people are unsure what they need to do or how to start a conversation with a loved one about Advance Directives. Having this discussion protects your loved ones from having to make difficult decisions on your behalf if you were to become seriously ill.

Heart to Heart Conversations include suggestions to gather your thoughts about how to begin the conversation about end-of-life wishes. Hopefully, you will find that once the subject is brought up, it will become easier and your family will be thankful you took the time to have this conversation. Have a Heart to Heart Conversation today.

Important Points

How well your healthcare agent performs depends on how well you have prepared them.

- ♥ Communicate your wishes with your family, friends, and doctor. Make them aware of the documents you have in place and give them copies of your Advance Directives (this document will not be beneficial if it's locked in a safe and no one knows it is there).
- ♥ As your life changes, it is important to review your wishes. These documents can be changed at any time and should be updated regularly.
- ♥ By planning ahead today and making your wishes known, you are giving yourself and those you love an irreplaceable gift.

Legal Documents to Consider

Advance Directives

The Living Will and Power of Attorney for Healthcare. These documents state what kind of medical treatment you want in the event that you are unable to express those wishes independently. These choices include the level of life-sustaining treatment you wish to have.

Last Will and Testament

Designates what is to be done with material items after death and names someone as the Executor of your estate. Last Will and Testament is not individual guardianship of dependents.

Durable Power of Attorney for Finances

This gives a designated person the authority to access your finances if you are unable to sign checks or pay bills. This is only effective while you are living.

DNR Orders

Also called a Do Not Resuscitate Order (DNR), it is to be completed and signed by your doctor at end of life. This gives emergency personnel instructions if your heart stops or you are not breathing. Idaho uses the POST (Physician Order for Scope of Treatment and Oregon uses the POLST (Physician Order for Life-Sustaining Equipment).

Bringing Up the Topic: Having the Conversation

Death of Someone You Knew

"After seeing what Bob's family went through while he was sick, I have been thinking about what I might want if I became ill. I have decided to complete my Advance Directives and would like to talk to you about my wishes. I hoped you might be willing to also talk about what you would want."

Media Coverage Related to Illness or Death

"I saw the story on the news (newspaper, internet, etc.) about the man in the car accident who is still in a coma. It made me realize how we never know when something might happen to us. I have filled out my Advance Directives and would like to name you as my Healthcare Agent to speak for me if I can't. I would also like to talk to you about what my healthcare wishes are."

Financial Planning

"I have been working on my retirement planning and it occurred to me that I also need to think about my healthcare planning. I have completed my Advance Directives and I would like to talk to you about those." You could also say, "Dad, I know you have done a lot of financial planning for your retirement. I was wondering if you have also planned for your medical care. Have you completed your Advance Directives?"

Annual Check-Ups

"I went to the doctor last week for my annual check up and he said everything looks good, but it made me wonder what would happen if there was something wrong. I decided to complete a Living Will and I wondered if we could talk about it."

Religious Events

"In church Sunday, the preacher talked about being prepared. One of the things he discussed was the importance of putting our medical wishes down on paper for our families. He told a story about a family that was left to make very difficult decisions for their loved one. I don't want to put my family in that position so I wondered if we could talk about what we would each want done if we were unable to communicate."

Discussion Topics with Your Healthcare Agent

The following questions are a guideline of suggested topics to discuss with your healthcare agent, **before they sign any forms**. We suggest no particular answers, but these questions should be considered in case you were ever incapacitated and your healthcare agent needs to make decisions for you. Answer these questions based on your own beliefs and convey those beliefs and wishes to your loved ones. Any other wishes or desires that you feel your healthcare agent should know should also be given to them so that they can carry out their responsibilities.

1. How would you describe your current health status? If you currently have any medical problems, how would you describe them and in what ways, if any do they affect your ability to function?
2. Tell me about your doctor. Do you think he/she should make the final decision about any medical treatments you might need?
3. How important is independence and self-sufficiency in your life? If your physical and mental abilities were decreased how would this affect your attitude towards self-sufficiency?
4. Do you want to donate parts of your body to someone else at the time of your death (organ donation)?
5. Do you think you would want to have any of the following medical treatments performed on you?
 - ♥ Kidney dialysis (used if your kidneys stop working).
 - ♥ Cardiopulmonary resuscitation, also called CPR (used if your heart stops beating).
 - ♥ Respirator (used if you are unable to breathe on your own).
 - ♥ Artificial Nutrition (used if you are unable to eat food).
 - ♥ Artificial Hydration (used if you are unable to take in (or drink) fluids).
6. How do you feel about the use of life-sustaining measures in the face of terminal illness, a permanent coma, or irreversible chronic illness?
7. What will be important to you when you are dying (e.g., physical comfort, no pain, family members present, etc.)?
8. Where would you prefer to die? What is your attitude toward illness and death?
9. What is your religious background and how does that affect your attitude toward serious or terminal illness, and what is your faith's role of prayer or religious sacraments in an illness?
10. What else do you feel is important to know?

Picking the Right Person

It is important to choose someone who knows you well, respects your wishes, and is capable of making difficult decisions. For example:

- Family members or spouses may be too emotionally involved, so they may not be the best choice. However, you know best and sometimes they can be the best choice.
- Choosing someone that lives close to you is beneficial so they can help when needed.
- Make sure to discuss your wishes and that this person agrees to **respect and follow** your wishes.
- Agent(s) should be at least 18 years old.
- Agent(s) should not be your healthcare provider; an employee or spouse of an employee of your healthcare provider; or serving as an agent or proxy for 10 or more people (unless he/she is your spouse or close relative).