



We all need a plan

How many of us have taken the time to stop and think about what we would want to happen if we became seriously ill or if someone close to us was seriously ill what they would want?

What is advance care planning?

Advance care planning is about documenting your wishes to communicate on your behalf when you are no longer able to do so. This will help your family and friends to make decisions about your care if you cannot. Advance care planning generally covers three things:

- thinking and talking about your healthcare values and preferences
- appointing a substitute decision maker
- completing a document such as an advance care directive.

Why do we need a plan?

We all make plans in our life for today and the future. We will all die one day so we should plan for that too. Having a plan can help us, our family and the health professionals who care for us to know what we want. You can start having a conversation at any age about what you want if something unexpected were to happen.

Making a plan becomes more important as you are getting older or if you learn that you have a serious illness. Being informed about what will happen can help in making preparations and can make decisions easier. When making plans and decisions you need to let people know what you have decided. This includes your family and friends. You should also tell your health professionals.

Remember health professionals will not know what you want if you don't tell them what is important to you. You may have particular beliefs or traditions that need to be taken into account in providing care.

Helpful resources

[Advance Care Planning Australia](#) has a range of resources including learning modules and factsheets.

Palliative Care Australia's [Starting to Talk Discussion Starter](#) can help you talk about your wishes and preferences for your care at the end of life.