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Advance Directives and Long-Term Care

Avoid confusion: let others know what you want

Advance directives explain how you want medical decisions to be made when you're too ill to speak for yourself.

These legal documents tell your family, friends, and health care professionals:

- What kind of health care you want
- Who you want to make decisions for you

Types of advance directives

A health care proxy is a document that names someone you trust to make health decisions if you can't. This is also called a durable power of attorney.

A living will tells which treatment you want if your life is threatened, including:

- Dialysis and breathing machines
- Resuscitation if you stop breathing or if your heart stops
- Tube feeding
- Organ or tissue donation after you die

How to get advance directives

Get an advance directive from any of these:

- Your health care provider
- Your attorney
- Your local [Area Agency on Aging \(AAA\)](#)
- Your [state health department](#)

What to do with your advance directives

1. Keep the original copies of your advance directives where you can easily find them.
2. Give a copy to your health care proxy, health care providers, hospital, nursing home, family, and/or friends.
3. Carry a card in your wallet that says you have an advance directive.
4. Review your advance directives each year.

Plan for long-term care

Visit [LongTermCare.gov](https://www.longtermcare.gov) for information and resources to help you and your family plan for future long-term care needs.

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