

About Advance Directives

A relief for you...a gift for your loved ones



About Advance Directives

Every adult has the right to direct their own medical care. Having an advance directive on file helps to ensure that you receive the care you want if a medical condition or injury renders you unable to make decisions or communicate. Cleveland Clinic recommends that every person age 18 and older have an advance directive document recorded in their electronic medical record. This gives you the opportunity to plan and discuss your healthcare preferences with your loved ones.

Advance directives are legal documents that provide written instructions about who can make medical decisions on your behalf and what your end-of-life wishes are.

Your rights and choices

You have the right to choose your own medical care based on your values, beliefs and personal choices. You have the right to complete advance directive documents at no charge, as long as you understand your options and can communicate your wishes. You have the right to NOT complete advance directive documents too. Advance directives are always optional.

Ohio law recognizes an Order of Decision Makers if you are unable to make healthcare decisions for yourself. If the state has appointed a guardian, this person is the first decision maker. If not, the Order of Decision Makers for Ohio, according to the law, are:

- Health Care Power of Attorney agent.
- Spouse.
- Majority of adult children.
- Parents.
- Majority of adult siblings.
- Other nearest relative.

The Health Care Power of Attorney allows you to identify an agent or decision maker for healthcare decisions. You can choose your legal next of kin, such as your spouse (opposite sex or same sex) or child, or someone who is not on the list (e.g., a friend, opposite- or same-sex domestic partner). It also allows you to identify alternate agents in case your primary agent cannot be reached.

An advance directive is especially important if:

- You want to designate someone outside of the legal next-of-kin list.
- You have multiple next of kin.
- You have specific medical wishes due to a medical condition, religious belief or personal situation.

Completing advance directive documents

You do not need a lawyer to complete advance directive documents. In order to be valid, the documents simply need to be signed by two witnesses or a notary. The witnesses may include anyone except the following: your designated decision maker(s); anyone related by blood, marriage or adoption; your attending physician; or the administrator of the nursing home/residence where you are receiving care.

Making changes to the documents

To ensure that your advance directive continues to reflect your preferences, review your forms at least every five years or at significant life events, such as marriage, divorce, new medical diagnosis or the death of a loved one. **You may make changes to the forms at any point by completing new documents, having them signed and making sure the most recent version is included in your electronic medical record. You may also revoke a previous advance directive document.**

Talk with your loved ones about your wishes

Talking about end-of-life issues is difficult, but it truly is a gift to your loved ones. If your family members are aware of your healthcare preferences in advance, it will alleviate uncertainties and disagreements when and if the time comes. We suggest using The Conversation Project (theconversationproject.org) to help guide you through discussing and thinking about your wishes, preferences, goals and values and completing your advance directive.

Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Order

A Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Order is not an advance directive document. It is a physician's medical order to allow natural death rather than performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). It is for patients with a terminal condition or those with a serious illness who wish to allow a natural death. A DNR order alerts emergency personnel to not provide CPR in the event that the heart or breathing stops, but instead to provide comfort care. DNR orders agreed upon by the patient cannot be canceled by a family member without the patient's consent. There are two types of DNR orders available in Ohio, and your doctor can explain the differences between each one. If you need further information about DNR orders, please talk to your doctor.

Types of Ohio Advance Directives

DOCUMENT	DEFINITION	WHEN IT'S USED
Health Care Power of Attorney (HCPOA)	<p>A legal document used to identify who is going to make healthcare decisions for you if you are unable to make decisions yourself. This person is called your “agent.”</p> <p>A Health Care Power of Attorney is not the same as a Financial Power of Attorney.</p>	<p>This document takes effect when you are unable to make your own healthcare decisions, such as when you are under general anesthesia, unconscious or in a coma.</p>
Living Will	<p>A legal document used to convey your wishes that life-sustaining treatment, including artificially or technologically supplied nutrition and hydration, be withheld or withdrawn.</p> <p>You wish to “allow a natural death.”</p> <p>If you meet criteria for the Living Will to be in effect, it supersedes the HCPOA.</p> <p>A Living Will is not the same as your last will and testament.</p>	<p>The Living Will takes effect only when two physicians agree that you are terminally ill and unable to make your own healthcare decisions, or that you are in a permanently unconscious state.</p>

What do I do with my forms after I complete them?

After you complete the advance directive document, talk to the people who may be involved with your healthcare decision making and give them a copy of your forms to make sure your wishes are followed.

We encourage you to have a copy of your advance directive document placed in your medical record at Cleveland Clinic.

You can do so in any of the following ways:

- Upload it on MyChart.
- Bring it to your next appointment.
- Mail it to:
 Cleveland Clinic
 Health Information Management, Ab7
 Advance Directives Processing
 9500 Euclid Ave.
 Cleveland, Ohio 44195

- Fax it to 216.445.9733.
- Email it to advancedirectives@ccf.org.

Please make sure that all required elements are completed prior to sending (pages 1, 3, 8 and 9 on the State of Ohio Health Care Power of Attorney form).

More information is available at clevelandclinic.org/advancedirectives.

Further resources

Videos, advance directive information and forms can be found at: clevelandclinic.org/advancedirectives.

The Conversation Project (at theconversationproject.org) is dedicated to helping people talk about their wishes for end-of-life care.

We recommend that you take the time to complete your advance directive document. If you are not comfortable completing it, please seek out further information so that your questions can be answered.

Know that the same high-quality patient care is given to all Cleveland Clinic patients, regardless of whether they have an advance directive in their medical record.

Organ donation

Consider donating your organs and tissue and the positive difference it could make to people who need vital transplants. By registering to donate, you offer these people hope and a new opportunity at life. Learn more at lifebanc.org.



Every life deserves world class care.

9500 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, OH 44195

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Cleveland Clinic Main Campus

216.444.3213 Care Management
216.444.2518 Spiritual Care

Akron General

330.344.6880 Care Management
330.344.6742 Spiritual Care

Ashtabula County Medical Center

440.994.7675 Care Management
440.997.6628 Spiritual Care

Avon Hospital

440.695.5217 Care Management

Euclid Hospital

216.692.8800 Care Management

Fairview Hospital

216.476.7070 Care Management

Hillcrest Hospital

440.312.4662 Care Management

Lutheran Hospital

216.363.2030 Care Management

Marymount Hospital

216.587.8801 Care Management
216.587.8141 Spiritual Care

Medina Hospital

330.721.5070 Care Management
330.721.5188 Spiritual Care

Mentor Hospital

440.578.3223 Care Management

Mercy Hospital

330.489.1377 Care Management

South Pointe Hospital

216.491.7263 Care Management

Union Hospital

330.602.0766 Care Management
330.364.0852 Spiritual Care