

Understanding Your Rights

You have many rights when you receive healthcare. You have the right to:

- Be told about healthcare choices and their risks and benefits
- Accept or refuse these choices
- Have your choices honored

Whatever you decide, it is important to talk about your decisions with:

- Your doctors
- Other health professionals
- Those closest to you

There may be a time when you are unable to make your own healthcare choices because of a serious illness or injury, such as a serious brain injury from a car accident. In these situations, someone else will have to make healthcare decisions for you.

Advance care planning (ACP)

Advance care planning is a process to help you:

- Understand possible future health choices.
- Make choices based on your personal values and what is important to you.
- Receive guidance on how to discuss these things with those close to you and the health professionals who care for you.
- Plan for future healthcare situations, including choosing who will make decisions for you if you can't speak for yourself.

Effective planning allows your choices to be known and will guide decision making. This process will provide great comfort to those who make decisions for you. Good ACP improves the quality of your life.

Documenting your wishes

Advance directives (AD) are a way to record your wishes for future healthcare. An AD provides instructions about your preferred choices for future healthcare. The AD lists the person you have appointed to make medical choices for you if you are unable to make them yourself.

Your advance directive may be a formal, legal document, or you may choose to communicate your choices more informally in a letter or by simply talking with your healthcare provider and/or healthcare agent. In many circumstances, however, **a formal, legal document that clearly reflects your goals and values may be the best way to ensure that your choices can be followed in the future.**

As long as you are capable of making your own decisions, you remain in control of your own medical care. When you become unable to make decisions, the choices listed in your AD will guide decision making.



Start planning now

You might not think you need to make these plans now. But it is extremely important to begin planning early. You will need time to understand, reflect, discuss, and plan for what matters most to you.

Common things to consider:

- Who would make decisions for you?
- How would your decision maker know what you want?
- How much medical care would you want?
- How bad would a serious injury or illness have to be to stop medical care?
- What does “no heroics” mean to you?
- What does being a “vegetable” mean to you?

Emergency care

In the event of an emergency, life-sustaining treatment, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), may be started before your medical record is available. Treatment can be stopped if it is clear later that the treatment is not what you wanted.

If you do not want CPR attempted, either in or outside the facility, please review your options for documenting your choices with your healthcare professionals.

Where can I learn more?

Intermountain Healthcare

- Talk to your doctor, nurse, or other healthcare provider
- Call **1-800-442-4845** (toll-free) at any time to be referred to someone who can help with advance care planning
- Visit this website: [Intermountainhealthcare.org/advanceplanning](https://www.intermountainhealthcare.org/advanceplanning)

Caring Info

From the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, NHPCO:

- Visit this website: [caringinfo.org](https://www.caringinfo.org)
- Call these toll-free phone numbers:
 - **1-800-658-8898** (helpline)
 - **1-877-658-8896** (en español: **Cuidando con Carino**)

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