



Planning Ahead: A Guide to Advance Care Planning

Helping you make your wishes known, before they're needed

What Is Advance Care Planning?

Being diagnosed with cancer or another serious illness can bring many important decisions. One of the most meaningful things you can do is create an Advance Care Plan.

Advance care planning is the process of thinking about, discussing, and documenting the medical care you would want if you became too sick or injured to speak for yourself.

It is not just for the end of life. It is about making sure your voice is heard and your loved ones understand your wishes.

Why Is It Important?

An advance care plan can:

- ✓ Ensure your healthcare reflects your personal values
- ✓ Reduce stress and uncertainty for your loved ones
- ✓ Help prevent family disagreements during difficult times
- ✓ Allow your healthcare team to honor your wishes
- ✓ Give you greater peace of mind knowing a plan is in place

Advance directives are only used if you cannot communicate for yourself.

The Five Steps of Advance Care Planning

1. Think

Consider what matters most to you.

Ask yourself:

- What quality of life is important to me?
- What treatments would I want?
- Are there treatments I would not want?
- What are my goals if my illness becomes more serious?

2. Learn

Understand the medical decisions that may arise during a serious illness, including:

- ✓ CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation)
- ✓ Mechanical breathing machines (ventilators)
- ✓ Artificial nutrition and hydration (feeding tubes or IV nutrition)
- ✓ Palliative care focused on comfort

Learning about these treatments helps you make informed decisions before a crisis occurs.

3. Talk

Discuss your wishes with:

- ✓ Your family
- ✓ Your loved ones
- ✓ Your healthcare providers
- ✓ The person you trust to make medical decisions if you cannot

Having these conversations now can prevent confusion later.

4. Complete Your Documents

Common advance care planning documents include:

Directive to Physicians (Living Will)

This document explains the types of medical treatment you would or would not want if you could no longer speak for yourself.

Medical Power of Attorney

Allows you to choose someone (called your agent) to make healthcare decisions on your behalf if you become unable to do so.

Out-of-Hospital Do Not Resuscitate (OOHDNR)

If you do not wish to receive CPR outside of a hospital, this separate form lets emergency medical personnel know your wishes. Without it, EMS providers will generally attempt CPR.

5. Share Your Plan

Once completed:

- ✓ Give copies to your healthcare providers
- ✓ Share copies with your Medical Power of Attorney
- ✓ Tell family members where your documents are kept
- ✓ Review your documents periodically and update them if your wishes change

You may change your advance directives at any time by completing new forms and informing those involved in your care.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need an attorney?

No. Most advance care planning documents can be completed without a lawyer. They simply need to be properly signed and witnessed according to state requirements.

Will my doctors follow my wishes?

Yes. Healthcare providers are expected to honor your advance directives or help transfer your care to a provider who will.

Does CPR always work?

Not always. Success depends on many factors, including your overall health and the seriousness of your illness. It is important to discuss what CPR could realistically mean for your individual situation.

Can I still receive comfort care?

Absolutely! Choosing to limit certain medical treatments does not mean giving up care. Palliative care focuses on relieving pain, managing symptoms, and maximizing comfort and quality of life.

How Valsa HemeOnc Partners Can Help

At Valsa HemeOnc Partners, we believe every patient deserves the opportunity to make informed decisions with confidence. Our **Advance Care Planning Consultation** provides personalized education and guidance in a comfortable virtual setting.

During your consultation, we can help you:

- ❖ Explain advance care planning in easy-to-understand language
- ❖ Review your goals, values, and treatment preferences
- ❖ Discuss common medical decisions that may arise during serious illness
- ❖ Understand advance directive forms and what they mean
- ❖ Explore Medical Power of Attorney options
- ❖ Prepare for conversations with your loved ones and healthcare team
- ❖ Answer your questions so you feel informed and empowered

Please note: Valsa HemeOnc Partners provides education, guidance, and care planning support. We do not provide legal advice or replace your physician or attorney. We encourage you to review your completed documents with your healthcare providers to ensure they reflect your wishes.

Questions?

Valsa HemeOnc Partners provides personalized oncology education to help patients better understand cancer treatments, supportive care, nutrition, and evidence-based resources so you can make informed decisions throughout your cancer journey.

Virtual consultations available nationwide

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