Step 1
Choose a Medical Decision Maker

Choose someone you trust to help make decisions for you in case you become too sick to make your own decisions.

A good decision maker will:
• ask doctors questions
• respect your wishes

If there is no one to choose right now, do Steps 2, 4, and 5.

How to say it:
“If I get sick in the future and cannot make my own decisions, would you work with my doctors and help make medical decision for me?”

OR

“I do not want to make my own medical decisions. Would you talk to the doctors and help make medical decisions for me now and in the future?”

Step 2
Decide What Matters Most in Life

This can help you decide on medical care that is right for you.

Five questions can help you decide what matters for your medical care:

1. What is most important in life? Friends? Family? Religion?
2. What experiences have you had with serious illness or death?
3. What brings you quality of life? Quality of life is different for each person. Some people are willing to live through a lot for a chance of living longer. Others know certain things would be hard on their quality of life.
4. If you were very sick, what would be most important to you:
   • To live as long as possible even if you think you have poor quality of life?
   • Or, to try treatments for a period of time, but stop if you are suffering?
   • Or, to focus on quality of life and comfort, even if your life is shorter?
5. Have you changed your mind about what matters most in your life over time?
Tell Others About Your Medical Wishes

This will help you get the medical care you want.

How to say it:

To your decision maker and doctors:
“This is what is most important in my life and for my medical care…”

To your doctor and family and friends:
“I chose this person to be my decision maker and I want to give them (TOTAL, SOME, or NO) flexibility to make decisions for me.”

Your doctors can help you put your medical wishes on an advance directive form.

Ask Doctors the Right Questions

- Write down questions ahead of time.
- Bring someone with you.
- Tell doctors at the start of the visit if you have questions.

How to say it:

If your doctor recommends something, ask about the:
• Benefits – the good things that could happen
• Risks – the bad things that could happen
• Options for different kinds of treatment
• What your life will be like after treatment

Make sure you understand:
“What I’m hearing you say is… Is this right?”

Your Action Plan

By ____________________________
I will __________________________