

# Advance Care Planning

## Planning for your future health care needs

What would happen if you became very sick or had a serious accident and could not talk to your doctor about your own treatment? Who would make medical decisions for you and how would they know what you want?

**Advance Care Planning** is a process of planning for your future health care and personal care needs. It is a process of deciding what is important to you and writing it down. If there comes a time when you are too unwell to speak for yourself, your plan will help your loved ones, and the health professionals caring for you, to make the decisions that are right for you.

There are three main steps involved in Advance Care Planning (**ACP**)

### Appoint Another

You can appoint a Medical Treatment Decision Maker. The person you choose should be someone you trust, who will listen carefully to your plans and goals for future health care, and will faithfully represent you. They may or may not be a member of your family.

If you choose not to formally appoint someone then your Medical Treatment Decision Maker (MTDM) will be the first person in the following list who is willing and available to make medical decisions for you:

- Spouse or domestic partner
- Primary carer
- Adult child
- Parent
- Adult sibling

### Chat and Communicate

Talk to your MTDM, family, friends and health professionals about your goals, values and beliefs, and your health care preferences. Tell them about what is important for you.

### Put it on Paper

You may choose to write your wishes down in a document that describes the type of treatment you would agree to, and what type of treatment you would not want (an Advance Care Directive).



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## How do I appoint a Medical Treatment Decision Maker?

- This is a legal document that is available from the Office of the Public Advocate (see below).

## What should I do with my Advance Care Directive?

- You should keep a copy at home in an easily accessible place known to your family and/or MTDM.
- Give a copy to your MTDM/family, your GP and the hospital you usually attend. You can also record details about your Advance Care Directive on **My Health Record** (see below).

## Will I need to revise my Advance Care Directive (ACD)?

- We suggest that you review your ACD if there is a change in your health, if you have been recently hospitalised, or at least every two years.
- If you want to make major changes to your ACD, you should destroy all copies of the current ACD and make a new one.
- Make sure that you give all the relevant people a copy of your new ACD.

## When is an Advance Care Directive used?

Your Advance Care Directive will only be used if you are unable to communicate for yourself. It will guide your doctor, your MTDM/family to make decisions that reflect your expressed wishes.

## What happens if I don't have an Advance Care Directive?

If you become unwell and cannot communicate for yourself, doctors will discuss treatment options with your Medical Treatment Decision Maker who can consent to or refuse treatment on your behalf.

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## For more information about Advance Care Planning

Talk to the staff looking after you or make an appointment to speak to your General Practitioner (GP).

## You will find further information about Advance Care Planning on these websites

Royal Melbourne Hospital – [thermh.org.au/patients-visitors/services-clinics/advance-care-planning](http://thermh.org.au/patients-visitors/services-clinics/advance-care-planning)

Advance Care Planning Australia <https://www.advancecareplanning.org.au/individuals>

## For information on appointing a Medical Treatment Decision Maker

Visit the Office of the Public Advocate website: [www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au](http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au) or call 1300 309 337

## For more information about the My Health Record

Go to <https://myhealthrecord.gov.au>; visit a Medicare service centre or call 1800 723 471

## Contact

If you have any questions about Advance Care Planning, please speak to a member of staff or contact us at this email address [rmh-advancecareplanning@mh.org.au](mailto:rmh-advancecareplanning@mh.org.au)

## Practitioner / Patient notes

Melbourne Health | MH02.02.05B | Manager, Patient Experience | Expiry September 2019



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