

WHO WILL SPEAK FOR ME?

Choosing Your Healthcare Representative

HEALTHCARE REPRESENTATIVE:

The representative you name as your medical power of attorney or healthcare proxy has the power to advocate for your medical wishes and make healthcare decisions for you if you are unable to do so.



FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A REPRESENTATIVE

- Your representative can be anyone you trust who is at least 18 years of age: your next of kin, another family member, a friend, or someone else. You cannot, however, appoint your primary care physician or any other healthcare practitioner involved in your care unless they are related to you by blood, marriage, or adoption.
- You can name an alternative representative to step in if your primary representative is unavailable.
- Once you've chosen someone, avoid potential conflict by letting others know your choice.
- Every state has a standard advance directive form that can be completed in the presence of witnesses.
- You don't need a lawyer to complete advance directives.
- LGBTQ+ people can face additional challenges at the end of life, so it's critical to include chosen family members in the decision-making process. See our LGBTQ advance care planning toolkit for more: [CandC.org/LGBTQToolkit](https://www.CandC.org/LGBTQToolkit)

Find your advance directive at [CaringInfo.org](https://www.CaringInfo.org)



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IN SELECTING A REPRESENTATIVE, ASK YOURSELF:



Are they comfortable talking about death?

They will need to engage with the subject.



Do they live nearby?

In a crisis, having someone local can be important but not required.



Are they assertive?

You want someone who is comfortable speaking with healthcare providers and advocating for you.



Will they respect my decisions?

They need to understand where you're coming from and be willing to honor your requests.

LOOKING BEYOND IMMEDIATE FAMILY

! If you're finding it hard to identify an appropriate person to serve as your representative, remember that they do not have to be a family member.



In some cases it may be better to ask a friend whom you trust.



Some communities have geriatric case managers who may serve as healthcare representatives for a small fee. Inquire with the Aging Life Care Association at [AgingLifeCare.org](https://www.AgingLifeCare.org).



Attorneys who specialize in elder law may also be willing to take on this role. Find a list of local attorneys by contacting the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys at [Naela.org](https://www.Naela.org).



You can consider asking a neighbor or a member of your faith community.



End-of-life doulas are available to assist individuals and families throughout the dying process, from choosing a healthcare proxy to bereavement support. Visit [NEDAlliance.org](https://www.NEDAlliance.org) to learn more.

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