

# Get the care you want: Partnering with your doctor

Partnering with your doctor means engaging in conversations to help you understand your unique medical situation and for your doctor to better understand you: your values, perspectives, priorities, and wishes.

## Follow these steps as you work with your physician:

1. Schedule an appointment with your doctor<sup>1</sup> to discuss your advance directives. This appointment is designed for you and your doctor to discuss both your unique medical situation and the options available to you as you consider your goals of care.
2. Prepare by writing down the important topics you want to discuss and the questions you have. Consider inviting someone to join you as additional support.
3. Complete your advance directive and the Compassion & Choices Dementia Values & Priorities Tool. Bring a copy of your advance directive to your appointment and ask your doctor to add it to your medical record.
4. Depending on your needs, your physician may recommend completing a “POLST” (or “MOST”) form. This medical document translates your goals of care into medical orders. It is the safest way to ensure your wishes are honored by healthcare providers if you are unable to articulate them yourself.

Most insurance plans cover advance care planning visits.

The My End-of-Life Decisions Guide includes the Dementia Values & Priorities Tool, which helps you create a dementia directive that can be added to your advance directive.

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<sup>1</sup> This same information applies if you have a physician's assistant or an advanced practice registered nurse.



## If you are living with a disease or serious illness, explore these considerations with your doctor:

Begin the conversation with a direct message, such as “I want to make meaningful decisions about my care, and to do so, I need to be sure I have a clear sense of my medical picture. I ask for your transparency, honesty, and medical expertise.” Then, ask the following questions:

- > Can we talk about what matters most to me at the end of life?
- > Do you have all the information you need about my healthcare proxy/agent, who you can talk to on my behalf if I am unable?
- > Can you help me understand the natural progression of my disease or illness?
- > What are the benefits of ongoing curative or disease-focused treatment? What are the burdens?
- > How will this disease or illness impact my quality of life?
- > Are there things I can do now to prepare for what lies ahead? Are there ways I can support my loved ones so they know what to expect?
- > Will you support my end-of-life choices? In an emergency, how will you know what my wishes are? How will my advance directive be used?
- > What are my options regarding palliative or hospice care?

Explore these questions with both your primary care doctor and any specialist who may be involved in your care. This comprehensive approach aims to equip you to make informed decisions and strengthen the partnership between you and your medical team.

