

Planning and recording my future healthcare wishes

Advance care planning and My Health Record



What is advance care planning?

Advance care planning is the process of discussing and documenting your personal values and medical treatment preferences at the end of life. These discussions can take place with your family, friends, carers and healthcare team so, in the event you become sick and can no longer make or communicate decisions, you receive the treatment and care you want and the outcomes you would consider acceptable.

Advance care planning also helps to give you and your family improved end-of-life satisfaction and reduced stress. An advance care plan can help your family and loved ones by reducing anxiety during a period when time together and comfort are the priority.

How do I get started?

You can start planning at any stage, when you're healthy, sick or preparing for the end of life. But it should be done when you have the capacity to make informed decisions, just as you would need to for a will to be recognised.

Start by reflecting on the care and medical treatments you do – or do not – want to receive as part of your future care, considering your current health and the likely progression of any medical conditions you have. You may wish to have your family help you with this and/or use a computer program like [MyValues](#).

Discuss these wishes with your family, friends, carers, and healthcare team. Let your doctor know with whom they should discuss your care if you're no longer able to make decisions.

Record these wishes once they're finalised. This can be as simple as typing out a document or writing a letter. You can also formalise your wishes in a legally recognised document known as an advance care directive. Each state and territory has its own information and forms to use when completing an advance care directive.

All of these documents should include the name and contact details of the person you would like to speak on your behalf if you become unable to do so yourself. Specify your desired future healthcare and outcomes, including whether you'd like to receive life-prolonging treatments such as CPR, the use of artificial ventilation and tube feeding.

These documents reflect your wishes. It's important to share them with the people you've chosen to be contacted if you're no longer able to make or communicate decisions (these people are known as advance care document custodians). You should also share them with your GP and other healthcare providers.

You can also upload advance care planning documents to your [My Health Record](#). This way your wishes can be safely and securely accessed when needed by any treating hospital, doctor or healthcare provider connected to My Health Record.

If you have a hospital admission or begin a new treatment program, your doctor may also discuss developing a goals-of-care document. A goals-of-care document is agreed upon by you, your family and carers, and your treating team, and outlines your medical and non-medical goals of care in relation to a specific episode of care. It also forms part of your advance care planning documents that can be uploaded to your My Health Record.

Where can I get help to start advance care planning?

The best place to start is with your GP, who will understand your current and potential future healthcare needs. It is a good idea to make a dedicated appointment to discuss your advance care plan with your GP.

There are several health-, financial-, faith- and cultural-based organisations that can help you prepare advance care planning documents.

The [Advance Care Planning Australia website](#) has access to template forms that are relevant to your state or territory and align with [local laws](#).

How can I upload my advance care planning documents to My Health Record?

Step 1. Scan the paper document on your computer

Step 2. Save it as a 'PDF' document

It's a good idea to include your name, date and the type of document in the title. **Note:** When you scan and save your advance care planning document, check that it is smaller than 21 MB in size. This may require you to scan the document in black and white only.

Step 3. Upload your advance care planning document

1. Log in to your My Health Record through myGov. If you don't have a myGov account, you can register on the [myGov website](#)
2. Select your record
3. From the 'Documents' tab, select the 'Advance Care Planning' link
4. Select the 'Add an Advance Care Planning Document' link
5. Scroll down to the 'Select a PDF file to upload' section and select 'Browse' to find the file you saved in Step 2
6. Enter the date that the document was last updated
7. Enter the name and contact number of the person who wrote the plan
8. Click the 'Next' button and the document will be uploaded

You can now review your uploaded document to check it's the right way up and all pages are included.

If you're happy with the document, select 'Save' and then 'OK'. If you wish to make changes, click 'Cancel' and then make the necessary change in the document and start the process again.

Review and revise your advance care planning and goals-of-care documents if/when your wishes, preferences and/or advance care document custodian changes.

Step 4. Upload your advance care document custodian's details

Up to two custodians for your advance care planning document can be stored in your My Health Record:

1. Select the 'Add a custodian' button found on the advance care planning overview page
2. Enter one or more custodian names
3. Select the 'Save' button

You can use your My Health Record to view and update your advance care planning documents or custodians at any time.

Step 5. View your advance care planning and goals-of-care documents

If your healthcare provider has uploaded a goals-of-care document to your My Health Record, you can view it online:

1. Log in to your My Health Record (if you're already logged in, go to the next step)
2. Select the 'Documents' tab
3. Select 'Advance care planning'
4. Scroll down to 'Goals-of-care documents available on this record' section, where you can select the document you want to view

Disclaimer

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