



# Advance care planning and memory loss

Do your loved ones know your health care preferences if you were unable to express them?

Talking with those close to you and writing down your wishes can help ensure you get the care you want. Planning ahead can allow you to play an active role in shaping your care, even if your memory loss gets worse over time.



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## Resources

### Advance care planning

- **The Conversation Project:** [theconversationproject.org](http://theconversationproject.org)
- **Alzheimer's Association:** [bit.ly/Alz\\_plan](http://bit.ly/Alz_plan)
- **National Institute on Aging:** [nia.nih.gov/health/caregiving/advance-care-planning](http://nia.nih.gov/health/caregiving/advance-care-planning)
- **HealthInAging.org**



### Driving

- **Alzheimer's Association:** [bit.ly/Alz\\_driving](http://bit.ly/Alz_driving)  
800-272-3900
- **AAA:** [seniordriving.aaa.com](http://seniordriving.aaa.com)
- **The American Occupational Therapy Association:** [bit.ly/AOTA\\_driving](http://bit.ly/AOTA_driving)
- **Eldercare locator:** [eldercare.acl.gov](http://eldercare.acl.gov)  
800-677-1116
- **AARP:** [bit.ly/AARP\\_driving](http://bit.ly/AARP_driving)  
888-687-2277
- **Pennsylvania Transportation Services:** [gis.penndot.gov/transitmap](http://gis.penndot.gov/transitmap)

## 1 Talk about your preferences.

**Advance care planning** allows you to make decisions now about the care you'll get later. This will help family or friends make choices for you in case you can't communicate them.

Starting a conversation about future healthcare preferences can be difficult. However, just beginning the discussion can help you think about what matters most to you.

### First, decide who will be involved:

- Who would you like to make legal and financial decisions for you?
- Who would you like to make healthcare decisions for you?

You can then move on to more detailed discussions with the people you listed above, to give them the information they need to carry out your preferences. Be sure to tell your healthcare provider who you want to be involved in your future care.




## 2 Record your preferences.

Talking with your family, friends, and healthcare team is part of the process. You can ensure these wishes are followed by writing them down. Such documentation can include:

- ✓ **Living will:** includes medical procedures or life-saving interventions you would want to have, or not.
- ✓ **Healthcare proxy:** designates the people who can make medical decisions for you if you are unable.
- ✓ **Medical directives:** provides specific instructions on whether you want to be hospitalized, and which interventions you would allow (for example, a feeding tube or resuscitation preferences).

*Your healthcare professional can help you complete the form with this information.*

- ✓ **Durable power of attorney:** designates someone who will make financial and legal decisions on your behalf when you cannot.

 **Share copies of these documents or where to find them with your primary care provider and the people who will be involved in your future care.**

## 3 Review documents regularly and update as needed.

Be sure to review your plans periodically, or when your health changes, to ensure they still reflect your wishes, values, and circumstances.

### Driving

For many people, driving is an essential activity. It gives the freedom to get up and go whenever desired. However, for a person with memory loss, safety can become a concern.

#### Signs of unsafe driving include:

- Forgetting how to locate familiar places
- Failing to observe traffic signs
- Driving at an inappropriate speed
- Hitting curbs
- Using poor lane control
- Becoming angry or confused while driving

**Driving assessments can help advise if your driving is safe.** Several organizations provide independent assessments (see 'Resources' on the back panel). Your local Department of Motor Vehicles might also perform assessments.

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**These are general recommendations only; specific clinical decisions should be made by the treating clinician based on an individual patient's clinical condition.**

[AlosaHealth.org](https://AlosaHealth.org)



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