

Advance Care Planning – Q&A

What is ACP?

Advance Care Planning (ACP) focuses on a person's goals and wishes about how they want to be cared for in the future. Part of ACP includes writing down your wishes, telling your loved ones about your wishes/goals and sometimes appointing someone to make decisions on your behalf if you are no longer able to make decisions on your own.

Why is ACP Important?

There comes a time when further tests or treatments are not wanted by an individual with a terminal illness. However, if a person is not well enough to make this decision, the Power of Attorney for Personal Care and family members may be asked what the person would wish. This is a large responsibility.

By having goals and wishes communicated to your loved ones, they are able to be informed and make decisions in the way you might have. This is reassuring to your loved ones, reducing worry that they might have to guess what you would want.

Having an ACP can help ensure your wishes/goals are followed, and reduce the stress for family and the healthcare team in times of crisis.

What kinds of choices can be made?

Choices about any personal care can be made, which include:

- health care
- food and feeding decisions
- living arrangements
- clothing
- hygiene
- safety

**Decisions about financial and property decisions are followed and managed under another process.*

These questions and choices are focused on how to ensure the best possible quality of life at end of life.

What is the role of the patient and family?

It is important when making decisions that you involve your family and healthcare team.

It is important when making decisions for a loved one that you focus on "What would they want done?" instead of "What do I want done for them?".

What is the role of the healthcare team?

Your healthcare team will ask what your goals are throughout your treatment and during your hospital admission/appointments. Your healthcare team will document conversations that you have had in your medical chart for the team to reference.

Your healthcare team will help answer questions you might have on ACP.

How can these choices be communicated?

Your wishes can be communicated however you feel the most comfortable (video, audio or written). These wishes can be changed at anytime. It is important to communicate these wishes with your healthcare team as well.

If an individual chooses to have someone appointed as their Power of Attorney, they must communicate this in writing. Find information about this process here –

[Make a power of attorney | Ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/page/make-a-power-of-attorney)

What is an advance directive for a Power of Attorney for Personal Care?

An individual will document decisions and choices in an advance directive. A Power of Attorney for Personal Care is a document where you can identify an individual(s) to make decisions for you, and to communicate your spoken wishes.

Resources:

SPEAK UP ONTARIO www.advancecareplanning.ca/resource/ontario/

VIRTUAL HOSPICE www.virtualhospice.ca

POWER OF ATTORNEY www.ontario.ca/page/make-power-attorney