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GOLD COAST

An Australian Government Initiative

# Planning your future care today

Easy to understand information about  
advance care planning





## The future of your health and care

Have you thought about what your life would look like if you fell sick or had an accident, and could no longer care or speak for yourself?

Sometimes you need to think about the different situations you may find yourself in as you move through life. Although you can't predict the future, you can plan ahead to ensure your health wishes and choices are known by your family, friends, doctors and health professionals.

Use this booklet as a starting point to plan your future care.

*“Sometimes unexpected things happen. Have you planned your future health care choices? Talking with your family is a great start.”*

# Let's talk about...

What is Advance Care Planning (ACP)? .....p 5

## Steps to Advance Care Planning

Step 1: Think about your values, beliefs and future health care choices .....p 6

Step 2: Start the ACP conversation .....p 8

Step 3: Document your choices .....p 9

Step 4: Store your ACP documents .....p 16

Step 5: Revise and update your ACP documents .....p 17

**Other things you may want to consider** .....P 17

**Your future care checklist: ACP future planning activities** .....p 18

**Where can you get more information?** .....p 19



### Disclaimer

This booklet is intended to provide general information. It does not replace specific medical, legal, or financial advice that you may receive. Individual situations vary. If you have questions about your health or medical conditions, please speak with your doctor or healthcare provider.

# Advance Care Planning

It's never too early to plan for the future.

Advance Care Planning is the ongoing process of sharing your wishes, beliefs and health choices with your family, friends, doctors and health professionals.

You can start Advance Care Planning at any stage of your life, regardless of your age or health status. A plan for the future will prepare you for unexpected illnesses, accidents or emergencies. It will ensure your loved ones and doctors are aware of your choices and can make decisions about the care that you would want.

Here are some simple steps to Advance Care Planning.



# Steps to Advance Care Planning

## Step 1

Think about your personal values, beliefs and future health care preferences and who could make decisions on your behalf.

Your personal values and beliefs determine what matters most to you in life. They guide the way you live your life and shape the decisions you make.

Consider what you would need to live meaningfully and what would be important to you if you have an accident or fall ill and lost the ability to speak for yourself or make decisions about your care.

*You can start thinking about:*

- **What do you value or like about your life?** What activities do you enjoy? What makes your day meaningful? What religious or spiritual beliefs are important to you?
- **What you would like known about you when health care decisions are being made?** Think about your past experiences, wishes and beliefs or what is important to you.
- **What sort of care and care treatments would you want, including situations where serious illness or disability may be involved?** Consider where you would like to be taken care of if you were diagnosed with a severe condition that you could not recover from. For example, at home, at a hospital, at an aged care facility or hospice.
- **What are the health outcomes that you would find unacceptable?** Think about what you would not want. For example, being kept alive with machines with no chance of improvement or not being able to communicate with others.
- **If you are very sick, who are the people you would like to have by your side?** Who do you trust to make care decisions for you? Who would respect and understand your wishes and choices for care?



- **If you were nearing death, describe what would be important or comforting to you.** Think about your personal preferences, special traditions, or spiritual support. Indicate the place you would prefer to die (e.g. home, hospital, nursing home). Consider how you would want to be cared for after you die, your spiritual, religious and cultural practices.

*The above questions can help you start thinking about what is important to you and start your advance care planning journey.*

**If you would like to read more, the following websites might be helpful:**

- [Advance Care Planning Australia](#) – provides information about the [ACP process and what to think about \(consider\)](#).
- [My Values](#) – an online tool that allows you to create your future health care goals.
- [My Care My Choices](#) – provides information about ACP in Queensland.

**Take your time. When ready you can continue with “Step 2 – Start the conversation”.**

## Step 2

Start the conversation with your doctor and loved ones (including the person/s who might make decisions for you)



- Talk to your doctors and loved ones about your wishes and preferences for care, including medical treatments. This will help them understand your decisions.
- Choose a person you trust (who will listen to your values and understands your choices for future care) to make medical treatment decisions on your behalf in case you can't speak or communicate for yourself.

### **The following websites and resources can help you start the conversation:**

- [Dying to talk](#) - has tools to guide advance care planning, including [discussion starters](#).
- [Advance Care Planning Australia](#) - provides information on starting the conversation.
- [Death over dinner](#) - conversation starter with your family and friends about end-of-life planning.
- [Office of Advance Care Planning](#) - has a telephone service 1300 007 227 for you to start the conversation of what documents to complete.



## Step 3

### Documenting preferences in your Advance Care Planning documents

To ensure your wishes are carried out and your loved ones, doctors and health professionals understand your choices, you will need to complete and sign advance care planning documents. Some documents may require discussions and sign off by your doctor, Lawyer or Justice of the Peace for completion.

You will need to be 18 years or older and have decision-making capacity.

#### What is decision-making capacity?

Capacity is a legal term that refers to the ability to exercise the decision-making process to make informed decisions about personal health and financial matters.

All adults are presumed to have capacity to make decisions unless it can be shown otherwise. A person with decision making capacity can:

- Comprehend and retain information needed to make a decision. This includes understanding the choices available and considering the consequences or risks.
- Ability to make and communicate your choices to others.

You can find more information about decision making capacity in the [Queensland Capacity Assessment Guidelines 2020](#).





## Nominate the person/s to act on your behalf by completing an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPOA) form

An [Enduring Power of Attorney](#) (EPOA) is a **Queensland legal document** you complete to appoint a person/s you trust (your Attorney) to make financial and/ or personal and health decisions on your behalf when you're unable to. For example, in the event of serious illness or injury and you can't speak for yourself.

If you appoint an attorney for:

- **Personal and health decisions**, your attorney's power to make these decisions start when you are unable to do so.
- **Financial decisions**, you can specify when your attorney's can begin making those decisions.

There are two separate EPOA forms:

- [Enduring Power of Attorney - Short Form](#) allows you to appoint:
  - An attorney for financial decisions only OR
  - An attorney for personal and health decisions only OR
  - The same attorney for financial and personal/ health decisions.
- [Enduring Power of Attorney - Long Form](#) allows you to appoint different attorneys for personal, health and financial decisions.

You can cancel (revoke) your Enduring Power of Attorney at any time while you have the capacity to make decisions. To revoke your EPOA you must complete the [Revocation of an Enduring Power of Attorney Form](#).

The [Enduring Power of Attorney – Explanatory Guide](#) provides detailed information about how to complete your EPOA form. It also has a checklist of steps that you need to complete to ensure your EPOA form is valid.

**Remember:** Immediately after your death, your Enduring Power of Attorney stops, and your Will comes into effect.



### **How to ensure my EPOA form is legally binding?**

To ensure your EPOA form is legally binding you need to:

1. Sign the form in front of an eligible witness - Justice of the Peace (JP), Commissioner for Declarations, Notary Public or Lawyer.
2. Ask your eligible witness to sign the form.
3. Ask your attorney(s) to sign the form.



## Complete your Advance Health Directive form and/or Statement of Choices form

### Advance Health Directive (AHD)

An [Advance Health Directive](#) is a **Queensland legal document** that records your future health care choices. It will only take effect if you don't have capacity to make health choices or communicate your wishes.

When completing the document, you'll be able to provide:

- Instructions about medical treatments, such as life sustaining treatments and your desired quality of life.
- You may also choose to appoint an attorney (also called substitute decision-maker) to make health and personal decisions for you if you are unable to.
- Information about your existing health conditions, allergies, religious or cultural beliefs that may affect your care.

#### What are life sustaining treatments?

These treatments support you when you're seriously ill or at the end of life. These treatments can prolong your life even when your body organs stop working well. Some of these treatments are:

- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) – combination of techniques, including chest compressions, to keep your heart pumping.
- Assisted ventilation – using a ventilator machine or mouth to mouth technique to support your breathing.
- Artificial nutrition and hydration.

The [Advance Health Directive - Explanatory Guide](#) provides detailed information about how to complete your AHD form. It also has a checklist of steps that you need to complete to ensure your AHD form is completed correctly and valid.



## How to ensure my AHD form is legally binding?

To ensure your AHD form is legally binding you need to:

1. Ask your Doctor to sign the form.
2. Sign the form in front of an eligible witness - Justice of the Peace (JP), Commissioner for Declarations, Notary Public or Lawyer.
3. Ask your eligible witness to sign the form.
4. Ask your attorney(s) (the person nominated to make personal and health decisions on your behalf) to sign the form.

## Statement of Choices (SoC)

The [Statement of Choices](#) is a **non legally binding** values-based document in which you can record your wishes, values, and beliefs for future healthcare. The content can still provide valuable information for your loved ones, doctors and health professionals when you cannot communicate your choices.

It is used in Queensland public hospitals and health care facilities, residential aged care facilities and general practice.

There are two type of forms that can be completed:

- [Statement of Choices Form A](#) – completed when you **have** decision making capacity to make your own healthcare choices.
- [Statement of Choices Form B](#) – completed on behalf of a person who **doesn't have** decision making capacity or requires support to make healthcare choices.

**Remember:** Discuss the SoC with your doctor, sign the form and ask your doctor to sign it.

## Where can I find Advance Care Planning forms?

- You can download the [Enduring Power of Attorney](#) and the [Advance Health Directive](#) forms online from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General website. Forms are available in some newsagencies and post offices.
- You can download the [Statement of Choices](#) form online from the [My Care My Choices](#) website.
- Contact the [Office of Advance Care Planning](#) in Queensland to request SoC forms and brochures to be posted to you.
- You can contact [Advance Care Planning Australia's Advisory Service](#) 1300 208 582 to request advance care planning documents to be posted to you.



## Step 4

### Store your Advance Care Planning documents

Once your documents are completed, signed, dated, and witnessed as per requirements, you are encouraged to:

- **Keep your completed original Advance Care Planning documents in a safe and accessible place.**
- **Give copies of your completed Advance Care Planning documents to those you trust who may need to be involved in decisions about your future health care (family and/or close friends) and doctors.**
- **Provide copies of your completed advance care planning documents to the [Office of Advance Care Planning \(OACP\) in Queensland](#).**

The OACP uploads your completed Advance Care Planning documents to your Queensland Health electronic hospital record. This ensures your GP, Queensland Ambulance Services, hospital and residential aged care facilities have access to these documents.

#### Send your documents via:

**Email:** [acp@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:acp@health.qld.gov.au)

**Fax:** 1300 008 227

**Post:** PO Box 2274, Runcorn Qld 4113

The OACP will review your documents and if they are incomplete or any changes are needed, they will let you know via email.

#### Remember

- Provide copies to your local hospital when you attend.
- It is recommended that you upload [your Advance Care Planning documents to your My Health Record](#). You can do this via the [My Health Record](#) website.



## Step 5

### Revise and update your Advance Care Planning documents as needed

As circumstances can change, you may want to update your documents and forms. Your Advance Care Planning documents should be reviewed:

- when your health, personal or living situation changes
- when your preferences change
- If your Attorney (nominated person to act on your behalf) changes

#### Remember

- Keep your Advance Care Planning documents up to date.
- Documents can be updated by correcting the sections and initialing next to your changes.

#### Other things you may want to consider

- [Make your Will](#)
- Decide on [organ and tissue donations](#)
- Register for [myGov](#) and access [My Health Record](#)
- Register for [My Aged Care](#) (if 65 years and over)
- Consider your [life insurance](#)
- Consider your [superannuation](#)



#### We welcome your feedback

Please scan QR Code and complete the short five question evaluation survey



## Your Future Care Checklist

Below is a checklist with steps and other documents to begin planning for your future.

Future Advance Care Planning (ACP) activities	Completed
<b>Start</b> the conversation with your doctors and loved ones about ACP. <i>p 6-8</i>	
<b>Nominate</b> your Enduring Power of Attorney (EPOA). <i>p 10</i>	
<b>Complete</b> your Advance Health Directive (AHD) document. <i>p 12</i>	
<b>Complete</b> your Statement of Choices (SoC) document. <i>p 14</i>	
<b>Store</b> your completed original ACP documents (Enduring Power of Attorney, Advance Health Directive, Statement of Choices) in a safe and accessible place. <i>p 16</i>	
<b>Share</b> copies of your completed ACP documents with family and/or friends and doctors. <i>p 16</i>	
<b>Send</b> your ACP documents to the Office of Advance Care Planning to be placed on Queensland Health electronic hospital record (medical file). <i>p 16</i>	
<b>Upload</b> your ACP documents to My Health Record (if you have internet access). <i>p 16</i>	
<b>Review and update</b> your ACP documents if required. <i>p 17</i>	

# Where can you get more information?

- [My Care My Choices](#) website
- [Office of Advance Care Planning \(OACP\) QLD](#)  
Ph: 1300 007 227  
E: [acp@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:acp@health.qld.gov.au)
- [Advance Care Planning Australia](#)  
Ph: 1300 208 582
- [Public Trustee Queensland](#)  
Ph: 1300 360 044
- [myGov](#)  
Ph: 13 23 07
- [My Health Record](#)  
Ph: 1800 723 471
- [My Aged Care](#)  
Ph: 1800 200 422
- [DonateLife Queensland](#)  
Ph: (07) 3176 2350  
E: [donatelifelife@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:donatelifelife@health.qld.gov.au)





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