

Talking with your health care team about the future

Your health care team would like to talk with you about your illness, your goals and wishes, and planning for the future. This is an important part of the care we provide for all of our patients.

Your illness is serious but stable, so now is a good time to talk about what is ahead, and to do some planning for the future. Patients who think through what is important to them and what their wishes are often feel less anxious, more at peace, and more in control of their situation. When a patient's condition is critical this often falls to families as patients are too sick.

Before meeting with your health care team

Please prepare for your conversation by thinking about these things:

- What would you like to know about your illness and what is likely to be ahead?
- What kind of information would help you make decisions about your future?
- What is most important for you to have a good quality of life?
- What are you afraid of about your illness?
- What kinds of medical care do you not want?
- What do you think it would be like to share these thoughts with your family?
- If you haven't already identified a substitute decision maker (SDM), who would be able to fill that role?

Please provide us with:

- A copy of your Power of Attorney for Personal Care papers if not on file at the hospital
- A copy of your advance Health Care Directive/Living Will.

If you don't have these documents or have questions about them, talk to your health care team or visit the Speak Up Ontario website at:

<http://www.advancecareplanning.ca/resource/Ontario/>

If you have not appointed a Power of Attorney for Personal Care, an SDM will be assigned to you based on a ranking list in the Ontario Health Care Consent Act. If you are uncertain of who this person would be, please ask to speak with the unit social worker.

Why is this important?

Decisions about specific treatments, intensity of care and even planning for future care needs must reflect your personal values and wishes, as well as respecting your personal beliefs.

These conversations focus on how you want to live, incorporating what makes life meaningful, and what a good day looks like – they are meant to help your team, SDM, and family understand important aspects of living well as defined by you as an individual patient – and therefore make the best plans.

Talking about the future won't change your ongoing care

Talking about the future won't change the plans we have made so far about your treatment, unless, of course, you want them to. We will keep providing the best possible care to control your illness.

You may find it helpful to have other people at this meeting. You can choose to have your SDM, or another family member or support person attend so they can be a part of the conversation. Please let your health care team know if you would like to have others invited to the meeting.

We understand that your wishes may change over time

This is the beginning of an ongoing conversation. We know that you may have other questions or concerns in the future. We will keep being here to support you and answer your questions so that you can make informed decisions.

This material has been modified by us. The original content can be found at www.ariadnelabs.org and is licensed by Ariadne Labs: A Joint Center for Health Systems Innovation (www.ariadnelabs.org) at Brigham and Women's Hospital and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License, <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>