

Living will

Enduring Power of Attorney for Personal Care and Health Care Directives

Patient information



Living Will

Enduring Power of Attorney for Personal Care and Health Care

It is important for you to be able to decide what health care you wish to receive. Due to an accident or illness, it could happen that you would no longer be able to say what you want.

By planning now, you ensure that your wishes will be known and honoured in the future. As long as you are able to understand and communicate with your doctor, you will be asked to decide for yourself, but if this communication is no longer possible, your enduring power of attorney for personal care and your health care directives will guide your doctor, family and loved ones.

The questions you need to think about include:

- Who will represent you to make decisions on your behalf if you are no longer able to do so?
- Which treatments do you wish to receive and not receive?
- Do you wish to receive treatments that prolong life?



Planning your end-of-life care means:

- Talking about this with your family, loved ones and care team;
- Helping your family and loved ones so they don't have to make decisions for you without knowing your wishes;
- Preventing conflicts that could arise if family members and loved ones do not agree on the treatments that you must or must not receive.

The most difficult decisions involve treatments that prolong life, such as:

- Resuscitation;
- Respirator use;
- IV hydration;
- Tube feeding.

What is an enduring power of attorney for personal care?

An enduring power of attorney for personal care is a legal document that allows you to name one or more attorneys for personal care.

What is an attorney for personal care?

An attorney for personal care is someone that you name in an enduring power of attorney for personal care to make decisions on your behalf based on your wishes when you are no longer able to do so yourself.

Name someone you trust who will make sure your wishes are followed and who accepts this responsibility.

If you have a power of attorney for personal care drawn up by a lawyer, you must name the same person you named in your enduring power of attorney for personal care. If not, your most recent document designates your attorney for personal care.

What is a health care directive?

A health care directive is a legal document that expresses your wishes in advance.

It serves to:

- Specify the care that you wish to receive;
- Guide your doctor, care team, family and loved ones in making decisions.



Will your enduring power of attorney for personal care and health care directives be honoured?

An enduring power of attorney for personal care and health care directives are legal documents. Your physician and care team must respect your instructions.

Discuss your enduring power of attorney for personal care and your health care directives with your family and loved ones. This will help them honour your wishes. Take steps to prevent conflicts that may arise if a family member opposes your health care directives.

Who should you talk to about your enduring power of attorney for personal care and your health care directives?

Talk about your enduring power of attorney for personal care and your health care directives with your:

- Doctor / nurse practitioner;
- Attorney for personal care;
- Family (spouse, children) and loved ones.

What should you do?

1. Ask for an enduring power of attorney for personal care form and a health care directives form from your doctor, nurse or another member of your care team or visit Vitalité Health Network's website at www.vitalitenb.ca (click on "Patients and Visitors" and then "End-of-Life" Care) to get the forms.
2. Sign and date the forms.
3. Have two witnesses sign and date the forms.
4. Give copies of the forms to:
 - Your attorney for personal care;
 - Your doctor;
 - Your family;
 - The hospital's Health Records Department for filing in your health record.
5. Think about revising your enduring power of attorney for personal care and your health care directives at least once a year. If you change them, replace all outdated copies with the new versions.
6. Your enduring power of attorney for personal care and your health care directives remain valid until they are revised.
7. For further information, visit the "Health" section (under the "Departments" tab) on the Government of New Brunswick website.