

1. Why does thinking ahead matter to me?

Serious illness and/or ageing can bring challenges that many of us prefer to avoid thinking about. At the same time many of us fear loss of control about decisions relating to our health care.

Thinking ahead and writing down what matters to you can be a daunting process. However if no one else knows what is important to you, your preferences and choices may not be taken into consideration.

It may be difficult to talk together as a family and you may not always agree; but talking about this can help inform decisions that sometimes need to be made at a time of crisis. You may also like to talk to someone in your health care team.

2. What is Advance Care Planning (ACP)?

ACP is the process of deciding what plans you want to make for your future care, often in discussion with a healthcare professional. This may take place when a person's condition starts to decline but can happen whenever a person is thinking about what care they might need in the future.

3. Why is it a good idea to write down what I think?

Writing down your preferences and choices can help you influence your care. This is especially important if a time comes when you are no longer able to care for yourself.

It gives you the opportunity to think about what you would and would not like to happen to you.

4. Where can I write down my preferences?

You can write down your preferences wherever you chose. There is a short booklet you can use for this purpose.

The booklet will guide you through a series of questions and ideas for you to think about. It is yours and you can show it to whoever you decide needs to see it. Ask the health care professional who knows you best for a copy.

It is essential that others are aware of this information and where it is kept.

5. What sort of things should I write about?

Bearing in mind your situation can change, the booklet can help you think about aspects of care that you haven't yet had to consider.

Everything that is important to you. This may include your physical care, values and beliefs.

You do not have to complete it all at once. You may want to think about or discuss things with your family and/or friends or your healthcare professional.

6. Can I change my mind once I have written down my wishes?

Yes.

You should review it on a regular basis with your family or healthcare professional and you can change your mind at any time.

Recording your preferences in this way creates an 'advance statement' but it is not legally binding.

7. What about treatment I don't want?

If there are any treatments or procedures that you do not want you should discuss this with your doctor. They may advise you to complete an Advance Decision to Refuse Treatment (ADRT) which should be put in writing, signed and witnessed. It should include a statement that the decision stands 'even if life is at risk'.

8. Who can I talk to if I want further help about anything in this leaflet?

You can talk to whomever you chose but your GP or the healthcare professional who knows you best will be pleased to talk to you about anything relating to Advance Care Planning.

Adapted and reproduced with kind permission from St Christopher's Hospice, London, 2010
www.stchristophers.org.uk

Not everyone will want to engage in Advance Care Planning and that is fine.

Useful Contacts

**Jersey Hospice Care,
Specialist Palliative Care Team**
Tel: 01534 876555 (24 hours a day)
or via **Jersey General Hospital**
Tel: 01534 442722
(Mon-Thurs 08.30-16.30
Fri 08.30-15.30)

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Family Nursing & Home Care
Tel: 01534 443600 (Mon-Fri 08.30-16.30)
Tel: 01534 442000 (JGH switchboard)
16.30-23.00 and weekends

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Or please contact your own **General Practitioner.**

EOLC-MISC-00002-20161003-v1



Thinking Ahead

(Advance Care Planning)

**INFORMATION LEAFLET
FOR PATIENTS AND CARERS**

