



It's hard to think about - and it's so important. The Advance Directive.

Sometimes things happen in life that we do not expect, like a car accident or a sudden illness. It can be hard to do, but have you ever thought about what medical care you would want if you could not speak for yourself?

That is what the Advance Directive is about.

So, what is an Advance Directive?

An Advance Directive is a form where a person:

- States what medical care they would want if in the future they could not speak for themselves. This could happen from a medical crisis or an accident.
- Chooses a health care representative to speak for them only if they cannot speak for themselves.

It is a legal document that a person fills out and signs. Also, two witnesses sign it, or a Notary Public does.

Who is the Advance Directive for?

Everyone 18 and older. It is very important for people 50 and older.

But I'm fine and healthy. So why should I be thinking about this?

Fill out an Advance Directive before there is a problem. This is because if you wait until there is a problem, it could be too late. This is a gift you can give your loved ones. It helps them honor your wishes in a difficult time.

What should I be thinking about in terms of the Advance Directive?

Think about what kind of medical care you would want and not want if you were in a health crisis and could not speak for yourself. For instance, would you want a machine to breathe for you? And under what circumstances?

Also, think about who you would like to speak for you only if you could not speak for yourself. That person is called your Health Care Representative. Sometimes a family member is the Health Care Representative. Sometimes it is a friend.

If I think about it, then what?

Then talk with your loved ones about what your wishes would be and would not be for medical care if in the future you could not speak for yourself. Then ask them what their wishes would be.

You could start by saying, "I need to think about the future. Can you help me?" Start by talking with each other about what is most important to you – in your life and as to medical care.

Also, talk with your doctor about the Advance Directive at your next visit.

Where can I get an Advance Directive form?

You can get a form in hospitals, clinics, doctor's offices and The Next Door in Hood River and The Dalles.

Pick one up and start looking it over. Then talk with your doctor about it.

Where does the Advance Directive go once a person fills one out?

You keep the original in a place where loved ones know where to find it in case of emergency. You give a copy to your Health Care Representative and your doctor.

What if a person changes their mind about what care they would want or who their Health Care Representative should be?

You can change your Advance Directive any time. Just fill out another form. Give it to your Representative and doctor. Be sure you and they tear up your earlier form.

The Advance Directive –

Think about it.

Talk about it with a loved one and your doctor.

Do you have questions? Call or text 541-399-4561.