

# The Importance of Having a Living Will

A living will, AKA an Advanced Directive, is a health care document that states clear and unambiguous directions regarding a person's healthcare wishes at a time when they cannot speak for themselves. It is different from a testamentary will as it does not dispose property or make bequests upon the person's death.



## Why it Matters

If the situation ever arises that you are terminally ill, seriously injured, in a coma, late-stage dementia, or nearing the end of life, it's likely that emotions are elevated, and your loved ones could have conflicting wishes when it comes to your healthcare. A living will avoids the uncertainty and ensures that you are in control of your own healthcare decisions and receive the medical care you want. The emotional burden of making the choice for you doesn't weigh upon your loved ones' shoulders as a living will gives your friends and family comfort knowing that you are taken care according to your will and the permission to be emotionally present without the responsibility of making those decisions on your behalf.



## What to Include

Things you may want to include or specify in your living will may include the use of:

- + Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
- + Mechanical Ventilation
- + Tube Feeding
- + Dialysis
- + Antibiotics or Antiviral Medications
- + Comfort Care (palliative care)
- + Organ and Tissue Donations
- + Donating your body

You may want to specify your Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) and Do Not Intubate (DNI) orders as a part of your living will as well.



## How do you Make a Living Will?

Your Living Will must be a written document and each state has different forms and requirements regarding their creation. In your state, it may be required that a form be signed by a witness or notarized. You can obtain the forms online or from most hospitals. If you would like to draft one yourself, going to a lawyer for advice can be useful but is not necessary.

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