

# Advance Care Planning

## Conversation Starter Summary



At Baptist Health, it is important for us to understand what matters most to you. Advance Care Planning is the process of understanding, reflecting on and discussing your experiences, values and beliefs. It outlines how you would want to live if faced with a serious or life-limiting illness. Here are five steps to start the conversation:

### 1. Think about what is most important to you.

Think about your family, friends and independence (what you are able to on your own versus what you may need help doing). Think about things you like doing such as traveling, volunteering or gardening. How do you define quality of life? What level of independence and communication would you need to live your best life? Where would you or could you compromise?

### 2. Take time to think about your medical care.

Do you worry you will get too much or too little care? Do you want to know everything and be involved in all medical decisions? How important is quality of life in your decision-making?

### 3. Start talking.

Do you want a listening ear or do you need guidance for decision-making? You can look to a family member, friend, faith leader, your medical team or another community resource for help. Think about who would or could make medical decisions on your behalf if you could not or chose not to make them for yourself. That person is called a Health Care Surrogate (HCS).

### 4. Write it down.

Document your HCS. It is important your HCS knows what matters most to you. That means discussing and writing down your goals of care. This may include medical treatments you would want or not want if faced with a serious injury/illness or if a chronic illness got worse. A Living Will (LW) is a way to document your goals, values and care preferences.

### 5. Keep talking.

Share your goals with family, friends and care teams. Share your HCS and LW documents with your HCS and medical providers. Your goals may change as you change so be sure to regularly reassess your goals.

### Looking for more information?

Step-by-step guidance and other advance care planning guides can be found on our webpage at [www.baptistjax.com/conversation](http://www.baptistjax.com/conversation).