



Advance Care Planning

Advance Care Planning is the process of thinking and talking about future medical decisions if you had a sudden event, like a car accident or illness, and could not make your own decisions. The best time to make these decisions is when you can choose for yourself.

Health Care Agent

A Health Care Agent is the person you choose to make medical decisions on your behalf if you are unable to make your own decisions. Discussing and sharing your wishes with your Health Care Agent is important.

Advance Directive for Health Care

An Advance Directive is a written plan that names your Health Care Agent and allows you to provide instructions for health care treatments based upon your values and what is important to you.

For more information about Advance Care Planning or for help creating an Advance Directive for Health Care, contact your health care team or Honoring Choices® Idaho.

HonoringChoicesIdaho.org

The name Honoring Choices® Idaho is used under license from Twin Cities Medical Society Foundation.

What does help with breathing mean?

You may develop a physical condition or illness that makes breathing on your own difficult, painful, or impossible. If you have a breathing problem, the options that can help include:

- Taking medications.
- Inhaling oxygen through a tube in your nose or mask over your mouth.
- Using a bi-level positive airway pressure (BiPAP) mask to help you breathe.
- Using a ventilator (a machine that breathes for you).

The following information can help you understand these options.

How does a ventilator work?

A ventilator is a machine that pushes a mixture of air and oxygen in and out of your lungs to breathe for you. The machine connects to a tube that goes through your mouth or neck and down your windpipe at the back of your throat.

Inserting this tube down your windpipe is called intubation. When the tube is in place, you cannot talk, eat, or swallow. You will receive medicine to help stay calm and comfortable when the tube is in place.

Being on a ventilator requires care in the Intensive Care Unit at the hospital. Skilled nursing facilities such as nursing homes are usually not able to provide care to someone on a ventilator.

How does a BiPAP machine work?

A BiPAP machine pushes oxygen into your lungs through a tight-fitting mask over your mouth. The mask may be uncomfortable and make talking difficult. You may receive medicine to help stay calm and comfortable when wearing the mask.

Because you do not have a tube guiding the oxygen directly to your windpipe, sometimes the oxygen can go into your stomach. Oxygen in your stomach can cause discomfort.

See other side for more information.

How effective is a ventilator or BiPAP?

- A ventilator and BiPAP work best if you:
 - ♦ Have a breathing problem that can be cured.
 - ♦ Need help with breathing for a short time while recovering from surgery or a sudden illness.
- A ventilator or BiPAP machine will *not* work if you:
 - ♦ Have an illness that cannot be cured.
 - ♦ Have a situation where your body is not able to tolerate the high-pressure flow of the oxygen in and out of your lungs.

Will a ventilator or BiPAP work for me?

Talk to your health care provider about how well a ventilator or BiPAP would work for you. If you choose to have a machine help you breathe, your health care provider will advise you about which option will likely work best for you.

What if I do not want a ventilator or BiPAP?

If you are not able to breathe on your own and decide you do not want a ventilator or a BiPAP machine, you will die naturally. If this is your choice, you will still get other medical care to keep you comfortable, manage pain, and control symptoms so you can live as well and as long as is possible for your health status.

How do I decide what is best for me?

Talk with your health care provider and your loved ones about your medical and personal goals and values. Consider the quality of life you may have using the machines. Ask yourself what you would want to do if:

- The ventilator or BiPAP machine does not work for you.
- Your health worsens.
- You can no longer make your own decisions.

What should I do after I decide?

Discuss your decision with your health care provider and Health Care Agent.

Remember, your goals, values and priorities may change. Your health status may change, too. Revisit your decision regularly as you get older or if your health changes.