

Healthcare Directives & Organ Donation

This section is about what happens if you're alive but can't make decisions for yourself.

If you have a stroke, develop dementia, or end up in a coma, someone will need to make medical decisions on your behalf. Who should that be? What kind of treatment do you want (or not want)? Do you want to be resuscitated if your heart stops? Do you want to donate your organs?

These are hard questions. But answering them now means your family won't have to guess later.

In Canada, there are a few key documents that cover this:

Personal Directive / Advance Directive (also called a Living Will in some states). This is a legal document where you write down your wishes for medical treatment if you can't communicate. It might say things like "I do not want to be kept alive on life support indefinitely" or "I want all reasonable medical treatment to extend my life." Each province and territory has different rules about Advance Care Directives, so check what applies where you live.

Personal Directive / Representation Agreement (called different names in different states). This is a person you appoint to make medical, lifestyle, and personal decisions for you if you lose capacity. They can decide things like where you live, what medical treatment you receive, and whether you go into long-term care. This is different from a Power of Attorney (which covers financial decisions).

Your wishes for end-of-life care. Do you want palliative care at home or in a hospice? Do you have a "Do Not Resuscitate" (DNR) order? Do you want pain relief even if it shortens your life?

Your organ donation preferences. Are you registered as an organ donor? Which organs do you want to donate? Does your family know your wishes?

WHY THIS MATTERS

If you don't document this, your family will have to make these decisions while they're stressed, grieving, and possibly arguing with each other about what you "would have wanted."

By writing it down, you take that burden off them. Make your wishes clear now, so they don't have to guess later.

Your Healthcare Directives & Organ Donation

Record your medical wishes now so your family can act with certainty later.

PERSONAL DIRECTIVE / ADVANCE DIRECTIVE

Note your status: Yes / No / Planning to create one.

DIRECTIVE STATUS

STORED AT

WHO HAS A COPY

PERSONAL DIRECTIVE / REPRESENTATION AGREEMENT - PRIMARY

NAME

RELATIONSHIP

PHONE

EMAIL

PERSONAL DIRECTIVE / REPRESENTATION AGREEMENT - BACKUP

NAME

RELATIONSHIP

PHONE

EMAIL

LEGAL DOCUMENT STORED AT

Your Healthcare Directives & Organ Donation (cont.)

END-OF-LIFE CARE PREFERENCES

Write Yes / No / Undecided for each. Your family needs to know.

DNR ORDER

PREFERRED PALLIATIVE CARE SETTING

PAIN RELIEF EVEN IF LIFE-SHORTENING

OTHER END-OF-LIFE WISHES

ORGAN DONATION

Note registration status. List specific organs/tissues if applicable.

REGISTERED AS ORGAN DONOR

ORGANS / TISSUES TO DONATE

FAMILY INFORMED OF WISHES

PROOF OF REGISTRATION - STORED AT

NOTES - ANY OTHER HEALTHCARE WISHES OR INSTRUCTIONS