



“Advance Care Planning is like retirement planning; important to start early, even if you don’t need it for many years to come.”

— Sarneet, School Teacher

Advance Care Planning: How Do I Start?

- **THINK** about what makes your life meaningful.
- **LEARN** about and familiarize yourself with relevant medical terms.
- **DECIDE** on your Substitute Decision Maker (SDM). This is the person that you trust and can make future health and personal care decisions if you can not.
- **TALK** about your values and wishes with your SDM, family, close friends, doctor and other healthcare providers.
- **RECORD** your SDM and communicate your wishes. For help, see Sunnybrook’s ACP Conversation Workbook.



To learn more about Advance Care Planning, please contact your health care provider.



Your Values
Your Wishes
Your Future

Let’s Talk About It: Advance Care Planning



The importance of planning for your health care in advance

There is a way to make sure you have a say in future decisions about your health care if there comes a time when you are not able to speak for yourself. This is called Advance Care Planning.

Advance care planning is a way to help you think through and talk about your values and wishes in relation to your future healthcare.

People who think through and talk about what is important to them can have a greater quality of life and are more likely to get the care they want. Advance Care Planning can help your family feel more able and less anxious about making your wishes and medical choices known to your health care team if you cannot.



What is an Advance Care Planning Conversation?

- ✓ An opportunity to reflect on and discuss your values, beliefs and wishes as they relate to your future health care needs
- ✓ An ongoing discussion that may happen at various stages in your life.
- ✓ It is important to include your Substitute Decision Maker (SDM) when thinking about and discussing your values. You may choose to record these conversations for your SDM to refer to in the future.



“It’s not the kind of conversation you want to have—because you don’t want to imagine those things. But now I know what mom values most and the decisions I might need to make for her one day will be less difficult.”

— Chelsea, SDM

What is a Substitute Decision Maker (SDM?)

Your SDM may be asked to decide about medications, surgery or life support.

Your SDM is the person who the health care team will rely on to learn your wishes and health choices if you cannot speak for yourself.

By law, every person in Ontario already has an SDM. For most people their SDM will be their closest living family member starting with Spouse/Partner.

For more information about your automatic SDM, please see Sunnybrook’s SDM pamphlet.

If your automatic SDM is not the person you want to be in this role, you can choose another person as your SDM by completing a “Power of Attorney for Personal Care” form.

How to choose your SDM?

- Your SDM should be someone you can talk to, who you trust and who knows you and your values well
- Think about whether he/she will make the medical choices you would make for yourself
- Your SDM should be able and willing to take on this role