

Mayo Clinic Minute: Creating an advance directive for your future well-being

Editor's note: April 16 is National Healthcare Decisions Day

No one can predict the future, but putting together an advance directive can bring you peace of mind and a plan for your medical care during an emergency or end of life.

Dr. Maisha Robinson, chair of the Palliative Medicine Department at Mayo Clinic in Florida, advises people to have these conversations with family members and loved ones. She also says you should create the document before becoming critically ill when things can become more difficult — physically and emotionally.

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Video	Audio
	In the tapestry of life, crafting an advance directive is the guiding thread, weaving your wishes and values into the fabric of your future well-being.
Maisha Robinson, M.D., Palliative Medicine, Mayo Clinic	Mayo Clinic's Dr. Maisha Robinson says you should think about your preferences for care at the end of life.
	"An advance directive is (really) a document that allows you to write out what your preferences are. It often will say, 'If you can't make decisions for yourself, who would you want to help you make medical decisions?'"
	Though it may be difficult, Dr. Robinson says to have a conversation with loved ones before becoming critically ill.
	"So this is not just for people who have a serious or advanced medical condition. All of us, everyone over the age of 18, really should be thinking about this and talking about this and documenting this."
	"It's too often that family members are left in the situation where they have to make decisions on behalf of a loved one."

	We often say this is one of the best gifts you can give your loved one by saying, 'These are my wishes, please honor them.'"
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Joel Streed.

Advance care planning is for people at every stage of life.

There are two main parts to an advance directive: writing a will and choosing a healthcare surrogate, which is a person who can make healthcare decisions for you if you are unable to.

Dr. Robinson has three important tips after preparing your directive:

1. Tell your healthcare surrogate you've chosen them.
2. Inform them where the document is.
3. Give the document to your healthcare team and/or hospital.

Dr. Robinson says not enough people in the U.S. have advance directives and that African Americans are less likely to create them and receive information about them compared to white people.