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What are Advance Directives and Do Not Resuscitate Orders (DNR)?

An advance directive tells your doctor what kind of care you would like to have if you become unable to make medical decisions (if you are in a coma, for example). If you are admitted to the hospital, the hospital staff will probably talk to you about advance directives.

A good advance directive describes the kind of treatment you would want depending on how sick you are. For example, the directives would describe the care you want if you have an illness that you are unlikely to recover from, or if you are permanently unconscious. Advance directives usually tell your doctor that you don't want certain kinds of treatment. However, they can also say that you want a certain treatment no matter how ill you are.

What is a Living Will?

A Living Will is a type of advance directive. It is a written, legal document that describes the medical treatments or life-sustaining care you would want if you were seriously or terminally ill.

What is a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care?

A Durable Power of Attorney (DPA) for health care is another kind of advance directive. A DPA states whom you have chosen to make health care decisions for you. It becomes active any time you are unconscious or unable to make medical decisions. A DPA is generally more useful than a living will, unless you don't have another person you trust to make these decisions for you.

What is a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR)?

A Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order is another kind of advance directive. A DNR is a request not to have cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) if your heart stops or if you stop breathing. (Unless given other instructions, hospital staff will try to resuscitate all patients whose heart has stopped or who have stopped breathing). You can use an advance directive form or tell your doctor that you don't want to be resuscitated. In this case, a DNR order is put in your medical chart by our doctor. DNR orders are accepted by doctors and hospitals in all states.

Should I have an Advance Directive?

By creating an advance directive, you are making your preferences about medical care known before you are faced with a serious injury or illness. This will spare your loved ones the stress of making decisions about your care while you are sick. Any person 18 years of age or older can prepare an advance directive. Our office can supply you with a form if you so wish.

For more information on advance directives or how to create your own, visit www.familydoctor.org

By signing below, I acknowledge that the above information was explained to me.

Printed Name

Signature

Date