

Goals of Care Designations

If you became too sick to speak for yourself, would your family or close friends know what kind of medical care you would want? Have you talked to them about what's important to you about your healthcare? [Advance care planning](#) is the process of thinking about and writing down your wishes or instructions. It includes choosing the people you want to make decisions for you, if you are unable to make decisions yourself.

What are Goals of Care Designations?

Goals of Care Designations are instructions that guide your healthcare team about the general focus of your care, and where (for example at home, long term care or hospice) you might want that care. After speaking with you and/or you and your substitute decision maker, a doctor or nurse practitioner will write your Goals of Care Designation as a medical order.

Why is having a Goals of Care Designation important?

In a medical emergency, if you are unable to speak for yourself, your Goals of Care designation guides your healthcare team to provide timely care that best reflects your health condition, the treatments that will benefit you, and your own wishes and values.

How is my Goals of Care designation decided?

Decisions are made in conversations between you (and your substitute decision maker, if necessary) and your physician/nurse practitioner about your current medical conditions, prognosis and treatment options, which may include life sustaining treatments. You will need to think about and discuss your options and communicate your personal preferences. If you already have a designation, provide the documentation of the designation to your physician/nurse practitioner. Your designation may need to be reviewed when your treatment plan changes, when there is a major change in your health, or at any time at your request. The 6 designations are shown below:

1	Attempt CPR, Full Code	All interventions needed to get the heart started including CPR.
2	No CPR, No Intubation, Supportive Care	No CPR Supportive care, symptom management, continued management of chronic conditions, and comfort measures. Allow natural death.
3	No CPR, No Intubation, Therapeutic Care	No CPR. Option 1 above plus measures and medications to manage acute conditions within the current setting.
4	No CPR, No Intubation, Acute Transfer	No CPR. Option 2 above plus admission to an acute care hospital (if not already admitted) for medical/surgical treatment as indicated. No referral to Critical Care.
5	No CPR, No intubation, Critical care	No CPR. Maximum therapeutic effort as in Option 3 including referral to Critical Care but not intubation and ventilation.
6	No CPR, May intubate, Critical care	No CPR. Maximum therapeutic effort as in Option 4 including referral to Critical Care and including intubation and ventilation.

CPR cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Intubation Tracheal intubation is the placement of a flexible plastic tube into the windpipe to maintain an open airway or to serve as a conduit through which to administer certain drugs.

Critical care Critical care services (hospital) meet the needs of patients facing *an immediate life-threatening* health condition.

Acute care Acute care (hospital) is where a patient receives active but short-term treatment for a severe injury or episode of illness, an urgent medical condition, or during recovery from surgery.

How is this information communicated to other healthcare providers?

The Goals of Care Designation medical order and care decisions are documented in your medical record and a copy should be provided to you and your family doctor.

What do I need to do?

When you're at home, keep your Goals of Care designation on your fridge. This is where healthcare providers such as Paramedics will look for it. Any time you go to the hospital or to any healthcare provider, take your Goals of Care designation with you (remember to take it with you when you leave).