

What to include in an Advance Directive

It is best to include the information below when writing an Advance Directive. Any Advance Directive that refuses life-sustaining treatment **must** contain all the information below.

- Your name, date of birth, address and any distinguishing features i.e tattoos, birth marks— in case you are unconscious or unable to communicate with a Healthcare Professional who will need to identify you.
- The name, address and phone number of your GP and whether they have a copy of your Advance Directive .
- A statement saying that the Advanced Directive should be used if you ever lack capacity to make decisions.
- A statement of which treatments are to be refused and the circumstances in which your decision would apply.
- The date your Advance Directive was created.
- Your signature.
- A dated signature of at least one witness.

If it is an Advance Directive to refuse treatment that will keep you alive, it must also include the statement, 'I refuse this treatment even if my life is at risk as a result'.

Occasionally, a person may wish to refuse a specific treatment in all circumstances rather than identifying specific circumstances. For example, you may wish to refuse a specific medication if you have a religious objection to it.

If you want to make a statement about refusing a treatment in all circumstances, you must talk this through with a Healthcare Professional first. In some situations refusing a treatment in all circumstances may cause more suffering and distress.

Registration of an Advance Directive

- Make an appointment in advance with your GP advising the receptionist that an Advance Directive is to be discussed.
- Bring identification of the patient containing a signature, driving licence or credit card.
- Bring the written Directive

You may hear Doctors or Nurses talk about a DNACPR request. These may also be referred to as DNARs. A DNACPR is a written statement to not give CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) if someone has a cardiac arrest. This is a separate matter and these forms can be obtained from the Surgery.

If you decide to cancel your Advance Directive please contact the Surgery as soon as possible.



**BRADFORD ON AVON &
MELKSHAM HEALTH
PARTNERSHIP**

Advance Directives and Living Wills



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Advance Directive to Refuse Treatment

This information is for patients who wish to know more about an Advance Directive to Refuse Treatment. This is also sometimes called a Living Will.

An Advance Directive is a set of instructions from you to your Medical Team. It sets out the specific circumstances in which you would:

- not want certain treatments
- want a particular treatment to be stopped.

It is a way of making sure that everyone knows what treatments you do not want or what treatments you want stopped should there ever be a time when you cannot make decisions for yourself.

If you have an illness that may get worse, it is not unusual to think about your future and the care you may need if and when your condition changes. Usually you will be able to talk to your Healthcare Professionals about the care you want. However, there may come a time when you are unable to make decisions about your treatment or care or to easily tell others what you want. This may happen, for example, if you were to become unconscious. An Advance Directive only comes into effect if you are not able to make decisions for yourself.

- It can help you avoid taxing treatments that you may not always want.
- It means your family and Healthcare Team will know what you want and can respect your wishes.

Preparing an Advance Directive to Refuse Treatment

Although an Advance Directive can be made verbally (spoken), it is better if you write it down. This helps to avoid confusion later on. There are certain situations where it must be in writing, for example, if you wish to refuse a treatment that will keep you alive.

Remember that refusing a particular treatment may mean that you are putting your life at risk and stopping a treatment might cause you discomfort or distress, so it is important to weigh up any decision carefully.

Always talk it over and discuss your wishes and preferences with your Doctor or Nurse and family beforehand. They can tell you about the benefits and any potential risks of the Advance Directive you are thinking about. They can also help you take your time so that you are sure about the decisions you make.



You will need to be clear about the circumstances in which you would want the Advance Directive to be acted on, for example, if you were to become unconscious and unlikely to recover from your illness. It may be distressing to think about these things, take your time and get as much support as you need from your healthcare team or family and friends. You might decide that:

- you would not want antibiotics for an infection if you were only expected to live for a few days.
- you would not want to be kept alive by being fed or given fluids artificially (through feeding tubes and drips) if you were unable to swallow food and drink in the normal way.
- if your heart stopped beating, you would not want anyone to try to restart it (resuscitation).

Who should know about my Advance Directive

When you have made your Advance Directive it is important to let the people caring for you know about it. This will usually include your Healthcare Professionals, next of kin family and friends. This can help to avoid any confusion if there is a change in your condition. People often keep copies at home and with their GP or a specialist nurse.