

How to Talk with Your Loved Ones

Remember, it's up to you to take the initiative and express your wishes. Your family or loved ones are not likely to raise the issue for you. Talking about end-of-life issues can be difficult for anyone. One way to approach the subject is to talk about why you have decided to talk about these issues. For example:

- Did a particular event cause you to make the decision?
- Did an article in the newspaper or something that happened to a family member make you think about it?
- What is motivating you to take these actions now?

Sometimes sharing your personal concerns and values, spiritual beliefs, or views about what makes life worth living can be as helpful as talking about specific treatments and circumstances. For example:

- What aspects of your life give it the most meaning?
- How do your religious or spiritual beliefs affect your attitudes toward dying and death?
- What is your view towards death?

Sharing your end-of-life care decisions with your loved ones will also help them ensure your wishes are followed. Decisions may include answers to the following questions:

- How important is it to you to be physically independent and stay in your own home?
- Would you want your healthcare agent to take into account the effect your illness has on any other people?
- Would you prefer to die at home if possible?

Reassess your decisions over time. These are not simple questions and your views may change. It is important that you review these issues and discuss your choices as your personal health or circumstances change your life.