



COGNITIVE
DECLINE
PARTNERSHIP
CENTRE

**UNDERSTAND ALZHEIMER'S
EDUCATE AUSTRALIA**
FIGHTDEMENTIA.ORG.AU

Start2Talk

A QUICK GUIDE TO PLANNING AHEAD



Start2Talk is a website of Alzheimer's Australia. This Quick Guide – using material from the website – was developed by the Cognitive Decline Partnership Centre to assist all adults to plan ahead.

What is planning ahead?

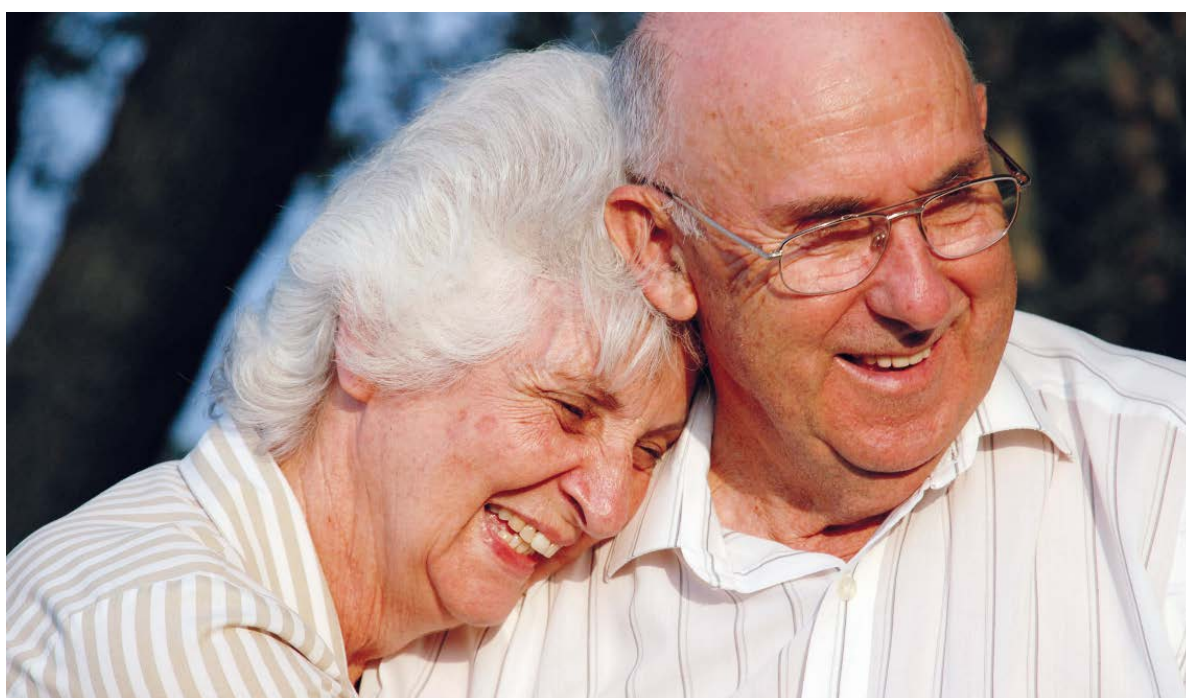
Planning ahead is thinking about your future, and putting things in place so that your choices will be known and acted on if you cannot express these choices later on in life. This may happen if you have a sudden accident, become very ill or develop a condition like dementia that affects your memory and your planning ability. Planning ahead involves talking to your family and your doctor about what is important to you. It might also involve organising who will make decisions for you if you are not able to.

Why is planning ahead important?

- You still have a say in how decisions are made for you if you can no longer speak for yourself.
- It helps your loved ones if they have to make decisions for you at some time in the future.
- It can give you peace of mind now, because you have told your loved ones your wishes and given both you and them a chance to prepare for the future.
- It is important for everyone, but particularly for people with chronic health conditions or early signs of dementia.

Note: This is a quick guide to getting started on planning. For the comprehensive version of the Workbook or to complete online versions or download the worksheets visit.

START2TALK
visit www.start2talk.org.au today



The 6 easy steps to planning ahead

Planning ahead is not complex or difficult. There are 6 easy steps:

Step 1: Start to think about your future

Step 2: Sort out your financial issues

Step 3: Choose who will speak for you

Step 4: Express your health and care wishes and what is important to you

Step 5: Discuss and share your wishes and plans

Step 6: Review your wishes and plans

I would like more help to explain this Guide or obtain and work through the Start2Talk Information and Worksheet booklet or web page online worksheets

- Yes

Helper's Name:

Relationship:

Help provided:

- Writing
- Reviewed the quick guide to planning ahead and answered questions
- Provided a hard copy of the Workbook or relevant worksheets from the website
- Other:

Date:



My Plan

First name: Middle name:

Last name:

Date of birth:

Address:

Telephone number..... Mobile number:

Email address:

I have discussed this plan with the following people and/or they have copies.

Name.....Relationship to me.....

Contact information.....

Name.....Relationship to me.....

Contact information.....

Your GP.....

Contact information.....

Step 1: Start to think about your future

Whether you are in good health or have been diagnosed with a chronic or life limiting illness like dementia, no one knows what's around the corner. Thinking and planning your life in advance of any loss of capacity means keeping in control of your life.

- I would like more information – See Worksheet 1.1 at: www.start2talk.org.au

Step 2: Sort out your financial issues

Financial planning is an important part of planning ahead, especially as a person reaches retirement age. There can be important decisions to be made e.g. when to retire, selling of any assets, pension eligibility or going into a residential aged care facility. You may need to make provision for changing accommodation or care needs, as well as for other people who are still financially dependent on you.

Have you made a Will?

- Yes: Location.....
- No
- I would like more information - See Worksheet 1.2 at:
www.start2talk.org.au

Have you legally appointed a substitute decision maker for **financial matters**?

- Yes: Name..... contact details
Location of form
- No
- I would like more information – See Worksheet 1.2 at:
www.start2talk.org.au

NB: In some states and territories it may be necessary to see a lawyer to complete a will and/or legally appoint a substitute decision maker for financial matters e.g. in NSW.

Step 3: Choose who will speak for you

Choosing and legally appointing a substitute decision maker for **health care** and **lifestyle decisions** is important. We generally expect to make our own decisions related to our healthcare and where and how we live. But what happens if you lose the capacity to make decisions – either because of an accident, sudden illness or a progressive illness like dementia? Identifying and possibly appointing someone who will make decisions on your behalf is an important part of planning ahead.

IMPORTANT: Substitute Decision maker are called different things in different states and territories e.g. Enduring Power of Attorney – Personal/Health Care. It is important to visit the www.start2talk.org.au or <http://advancecareplanning.org.au> websites for links to your state or territory specific information, resources and legal, prescribed or recommended documents.

Have you legally appointed a substitute decision maker for health care and/or lifestyle/personal care?

- Yes: Copies of this document have been given to:.....
- No
- I would like more information – See Worksheet 1.3 at:
www.start2talk.org.au

Step 4: Express your health and care wishes and what is important to you

Advance care planning

This is the process of thinking about and communicating your values, beliefs and health care preferences so that these can guide decision-making if you cannot make decisions for yourself at some time in the future. In this case, someone else has to act as your substitute decision-maker. This may happen if you have a sudden illness or gradually lose capacity from an illness such as dementia.

Have you expressed your wishes, values and what gives meaning to you in life with your substitute decision maker, family and friends?

- Yes: Name(s):;
- No
- I would like more information – See Worksheet 1.4
www.start2talk.org.au

It is worth considering and expressing at what point would you want your goals of medical treatment to switch from intensive treatments aimed at prolonging life towards a focus on palliative or comfort care.

Some people describe this in terms of an irreversible loss of ability to recognise people, feed themselves, walk, talk etc.

You may wish to write your health care preferences, wishes and choices in an advance care plan.

IMPORTANT: Advance care planning documents may be called different things in different states and territories e.g. Advance Care Plan – Statement of Choices, Advance Care Directives, Health Directions etc. It is important to visit the www.start2talk.org.au or <http://advancecareplanning.org.au> websites for links to your state or territory specific information, resources and legal, prescribed or recommended documents.

Have you completed any advance care planning document?

- Yes
- No
- I would like more information – See Worksheet 1.5
www.start2talk.org.au

Step 5: Discuss and share your wishes and plans

If you have completed any form of written advance care plan, Advance Health Directive, Health Direction or living will it is really important to let other people know about this. It won't help you if these documents are stored away at your home or your solicitor's office and nobody knows about them or where to find them when they are needed.

You need to have conversations about your wishes and your written documents with people who may be called on to make decisions for you i.e. your substitute decision maker. They will be able to advocate more strongly and confidently on your behalf if they have a copy of your written documents and are clear about the meaning and purpose of these.

Have you discussed and shared your Advance Care Plans with your substitute decision maker, family, GP, local hospital medical records unit?

- Yes I have given a copy of my advance care plans to:.....
.....
- No
- I would like more information - See Worksheet 1.6 at:
www.start2talk.org.au

Step 6: Review your wishes and plans

Planning ahead is not a single event that happens once. It is more like a series of discussions and actions, an ongoing conversation over time. Your health, family and social circumstances – and possibly your attitudes and preferences – may change and it is important that any plans you make reflect these changes.

- I would like more information – See Step 6 at:
www.start2talk.org.au

Congratulations on getting started on planning ahead!

It is now important to share your plan with important others in your life e.g. your substitute decision maker, family, friends and healthcare team.

If you have marked **no** under any section or marked **would like more information** it's a good idea to go to the Workbook available to download on the following website or complete online or download the individual Worksheets at www.start2talk.org.au. Alternatively request assistance from your community health or home care worker.

Information card

To slip into your wallet or purse in case of emergencies

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY	
My Name:	
My date of birth:	
Substitute decision maker to contact about my care:	
Name:	Contact:
Name:	Contact:
My allergies/significant medical conditions:	
.....	
PLANS OR DIRECTIVES ABOUT MY HEALTH CARE	
I have written plans or directives for how I want decisions to be made for me if I cannot speak for myself:	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If Yes, please get a copy of these from:	
Name:	Contact:
Name:	Contact:

You can complete, cut out and fold (with printing to the outside) and slip into your purse or wallet. This will ensure important information is available should you be involved in an accident or other emergency and can't talk to those providing assistance.

Development of the workbook

Research undertaken by the Cognitive Decline Partnership Centre found that advance care planning (ACP) can provide many benefits, including receiving care in line with one's wishes and reducing the stress on families. The research report recommended that planning ahead and advance care planning be promoted for all adults, especially people over 50. This Quick Guide was developed as part of implementing some of the report's recommendations. It builds on the work of Alzheimer's Australia to provide a mechanism for all adults to undertake planning for the future covering a wide range of issues.

The report is available at

<http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/cdpc/resources/advance-planning.php>

Contact: acp@hammond.com.au

Our thanks also go to I. Gilmore and L. Bloch, consumers who provided insightful comments on the format and content of this Quick Guide.