

# Be Prepared: Planning Ahead for Dementia



Dementia\* is a general term used to describe a group of diseases that can affect your memory, language, problem-solving, and behavior. If you or someone close to you has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia, it can be hard to think about the future. However, taking steps now to plan ahead can help you and your loved ones prepare for the changes that dementia might bring. Below is more information and resources to help you understand the key elements of planning ahead with dementia.

## What is advance care planning?



Advance care planning is a process where you express your wishes regarding the care you want if you get very sick and can't make choices for yourself. Most importantly, it allows you to have honest conversations with your family, care partners, or close friends about what matters most to you.

## What are the benefits of advance care planning?



**Helps ensure your care aligns with your wishes**



**Promotes open conversations about end-of-life wishes**



**Simplifies decision-making for loved ones**

## Why is advance care planning important?

**If you have dementia**, having a care plan helps you stay in charge of your future. Since it's hard to know how dementia will progress, it's important to start planning early.

**If you are a care partner**, your voice matters too. You play an important role in making sure the wishes of the person you care for are honored. Learn what matters most to them so you can support them as they navigate their journey with dementia.

*\*Dementia can be caused by many different disease including Alzheimer's disease, frontotemporal dementia, Lewy body dementia, vascular dementia, younger-onset dementia, and mixed dementia.*

## Advance Care Planning: Tips for Starting the Conversation

- 1 Keep it simple.** Talking about death and end of life can be scary. Start by having thoughtful conversations about what matters most to you.
- 2 Remember why this is important.** If you share your wishes, you are more likely to get the care you want. It can also help family, care partners, or close friends feel less guilty when making decisions because they know what you would want.

## ADVANCE CARE PLANNING: DEFINING COMMON TERMS

### ADVANCE CARE DIRECTIVE



Legal documents that provide instructions about what kind of medical care you want if you get very sick and can't decide for yourself. A living will and durable power of attorney are the most common advance care directives.

### DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY



A legal document that lets you choose someone to make decisions about your money, health, or other important things if you are unable to do so.

### LIVING WILL



A legal document that outlines your wishes about end-of-life care and medical decisions for situations when you are unable to communicate them.

### LIVING TRUST



A legal document that allows you to transfer ownership of your assets to a person, named a trustee, to manage them while you are alive and after you pass away. A living trust can help avoid a long, expensive, and public process called probate.



### Did you know?

In California, you can register your advance health care directive with the state. This ensures your medical team can access your registered directive in the registry, especially during emergencies.



### PROBATE



A legal process that happens after a person passes away, which involves validating their will, paying debts, and attributing assets.

# Advance Care Planning Resources

## Legal and Financial Planning Help

### Bet Tzedek Legal Services

Offers free legal help to low-income older adults.

📍 3250 Wilshire Blvd., 13th Floor Los Angeles, CA 90010

☎ (323) 939-0506 🖥 [www.bettzedek.org](http://www.bettzedek.org)

### Center for Health Care Rights

Offers free legal help for older adults with Medicare.

📍 4601 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 160 Los Angeles, CA 90010

☎ (800) 434-0222 🖥 [www.healthcarerights.org](http://www.healthcarerights.org)

### H.E.L.P. Health Care & Elder Law Programs

Offers free legal help, referrals, and workshops.

📍 23001 Hawthorne Blvd., Suite 203 Torrance, CA 90505

☎ (310) 533-1996 🖥 [www.help4srs.org](http://www.help4srs.org)

### Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles

Offers free legal help, referrals, workshops, and self-help services to low-income individuals.

📍 1550 W. 8th St., Los Angeles, CA 90017 *with additional locations in LA County*

☎ (800) 399-4529 🖥 [www.lafla.org](http://www.lafla.org)

### Neighborhood Legal Services Los Angeles (NLSLA)

Provides free legal help and self-help services to low-income individuals.

📍 The Wellness Center 1200 N State St., Los Angeles, CA 90012 *with additional locations in LA County*

☎ Legal Assistance: (800) 433-6251

☎ General Helpline: (800) 896-3202 🖥 [www.nsls.org](http://www.nsls.org)

### SmartLaw Lawyer Referral Services – Los Angeles County Bar Association

Connects individuals in Los Angeles County to qualified attorneys for legal help.

☎ 866-SmartLaw (762-7852) 📱 Text: (213) 243-1525

🖥 [www.smartlaw.org](http://www.smartlaw.org)

Learn more about dementia & brain health:



@ChooseHealthLA #HealthyBrainLA  
[www.bit.ly/hbla](http://www.bit.ly/hbla)

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## Helpful Guides & Additional Support

### Prepare for Your Care

A program to help you start the process of documenting your medical care wishes.

🖥 [www.bit.ly/prepforyourcare](http://www.bit.ly/prepforyourcare)

### Stanford Letter Project

A tool that you can use to document what matters most to you and what care you want to receive in the future.

- Stanford Letter Template: [www.stan.md/4f86rez](http://www.stan.md/4f86rez)

🖥 [www.stan.md/4exebH4](http://www.stan.md/4exebH4)

### The Conversation Project

A guide to help you have conversations with the important people in your life about your or their end-of-life wishes.

- Guides for Caregiver: [www.bit.ly/fordementiacaregivers](http://www.bit.ly/fordementiacaregivers)
- Guide for Yourself: [www.bit.ly/3zBcgSC](http://www.bit.ly/3zBcgSC)

🖥 [www.bit.ly/theconversproject](http://www.bit.ly/theconversproject)

### A Guide on Advance Care Planning Resources for People Living with Dementia and their Care Partners

A resource guide that has tools and information on legal, housing, financial, and palliative/hospice care assistance.

- Guide: [www.bit.ly/3WWzxHM](http://www.bit.ly/3WWzxHM)

🖥 [www.bit.ly/PHCOEDC](http://www.bit.ly/PHCOEDC)

### Advance Care Planning: A Conversation Guide

A guide with information about different advance care planning topics. It also includes words to know related to advance care planning and worksheets.

- Guide: [www.bit.ly/NIHACPGuide](http://www.bit.ly/NIHACPGuide)
- Order a Paper Copy: [www.bit.ly/NIHprintorder](http://www.bit.ly/NIHprintorder)

🖥 [www.bit.ly/NIHACP](http://www.bit.ly/NIHACP)

## Register your Advance Care Directive

California Secretary of State:

Advance Health Care Directive Registry

Registration Form: [www.bit.ly/3Bwt3qi](http://www.bit.ly/3Bwt3qi)

🖥 [www.bit.ly/3TYTwT0](http://www.bit.ly/3TYTwT0)

