

Advance medical directives (AMD)

To make your wishes known



It's possible to accept or refuse certain life-sustaining care in advance. This fact sheet explains the situations in which this can be applied, how you can do it, and what the benefits are.

What are advance medical directives?

This involves writing down in advance whether you want certain types of care or not, in anticipation of a day when you can no longer say it yourself.

When are they applied?

Your advance medical directives will speak for you and will guide the care team if you **become incapable of consenting** to care. Being incapable means you're no longer able to :

- reason
- understand your illness and the nature and purpose of the proposed care
- understand the consequences of your choice, depending on your particular situation
- express your decision

In addition, you must be in one of the following 3 situations :

- 1** at the **end of your life** and in a serious state of health with no possibility of recovery (incurable)
- 2** in a **coma** from which it is judged that you'll never wake up (irreversible) or in a permanent vegetative state
- 3** a **severe and lifelong (irreversible) impairment of cognitive functions**, for example in the case of advanced Alzheimer's dementia

As long as you're capable of giving your consent to care, your advance medical directives will not be used.



What care can I accept or refuse in advance?

The 5 relevant types of care are :

- > **cardiopulmonary resuscitation:** performing maneuvers to restart heart activity and breathing (e.g. cardiac massage, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, defibrillator)
- > **ventilator-assisted breathing:** maintaining breathing with a machine that helps move air into and out of the lungs
- > **dialysis:** circulating blood through a machine that cleans it outside of the body when the kidneys can no longer do it
- > **forced or artificial feeding:** feeding the person against their will or through a tube inserted into the stomach or through a vein
- > **forced or artificial hydration:** giving water to the person against their will or through a catheter inserted into a vein

If I accept a treatment in advance, is it certain that I will receive it?

No, not necessarily. The treatment must first be deemed appropriate by the medical team. An advance medical directive is not a way of demanding care.

Who can make advance medical directives?

Any person 18 years of age or older who is capable of consenting to their care.



How do I make them?

Here are the steps:

- 1** Obtain the paper form **Advance Medical Directives in Case of Incapacity to Give Consent to Care** from the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ). You can print it from the Internet or ask to have it mailed to you (see the blue box on page 3).
- 2** Reflect on your wishes and values regarding care. Discuss them with your loved ones. Your care team can also help you in this process.
- 3** Fill out the form. It must be signed by two witnesses aged 18 years or older.
- 4** Send your form to the RAMQ so that it can be filed in the Registry of Advance Medical Directives. When this is done, you'll receive a confirmation by mail.
- 5** Keep a copy and give one to your doctor.

Another way to make your wishes known is through a **notarial act** that covers the components of the form. The notary will forward it to the RAMQ. Ask the notary to give you two copies: one for you and one for your doctor.

What are the benefits of doing this?

Directives free your loved ones from having to make difficult choices if you become incapacitated. Without directives, your loved ones may be left in the lurch, not knowing what you would have preferred.

This also allows you to participate fully in the care decisions that affect you.

Can I change my directives?

Yes, all you have to do is fill out a new form or make another notarial act and send it to the RAMQ.

Do advance medical directives replace the mandate of protection in case of incapacity?

No, the mandate of protection is **supplementary**. It allows you to appoint one or more persons to take care of your well-being and property when you're no longer able to do so yourself.

Who can I consult if I have questions?

There are several people who can help you. Your medical team can help you better understand the care and health situations for which advance medical directives will apply.

A notary can help you if you want to draw up a notarial act.

Your loved ones can also help you in your reflections and fill out the RAMQ form with you.



To obtain the paper form *Advance Medical Directives in Case of Incapacity to Give Consent to Care* from the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ), you can:

Print it from the Internet:

> ramq.gouv.qc.ca/en

Click on Health Insurance -> At the bottom of the page, under Personal Decisions, click on Issue my directives in case of incapacity -> Download the form online

Obtain it by mail, by calling:

> **1 800 561-9749 (toll-free)**

To send your completed form to the RAMQ:

> **Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec**

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USEFUL RESOURCES

Health fact sheet :

[Consent For Care.](#)

Gouvernement du Québec :

> quebec.ca/en

Click on Health → Health system and services → End-of-Life Care → Advance medical directives

Educaloi :

Watch their video of about 6 minutes.

> educaloi.qc.ca/en

Type "advanced medical directives" in the search bar at the top.

Chambre des notaires du Québec :

Medical care and end-of-life directives

> cnq.org/en

Click on Your notarial services → Protection of persons → Medical and end-of-life care

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.



You can also find them on our website

chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante



Questions

The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal
chumontreal.qc.ca