



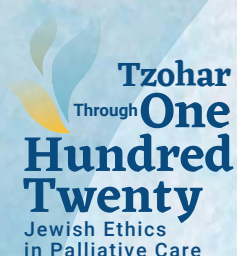
# Advance Directives

## Decide Today About Your Tomorrow

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Modern medicine opens for us many opportunities to prolong life, however these can also cause prolonging of the suffering of a patient with no chance of recovery. Oftentimes, decisions regarding medical care reach the family when their loved one is already unable to express his opinion. The family may act contrary to his wishes and feel hopeless or incredibly overwhelmed. A person who expresses his opinion about what treatment methods he is interested in in advance will enable his family to treat him according to his wishes and will make the family's decision-making easier, allowing them to know what he wants and act accordingly.

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## What is the advance directive document?

Every person in Israel who is able to express their wishes clearly and with legal competency can dictate their wishes for their future medical care by providing advance directives. For example, a person can instruct that if they become terminally ill and lose consciousness, the team should abstain from performing CPR on him. There are various types of advance directives nowadays and the laws of the State of Israel provide unique power to an [advance directive](#) signed in front of a doctor or certified nurse and submitted to the Health Ministry database.



## Is it recommended and proper to provide advance directives?

**Yes!** Whether you have been diagnosed with a disease or if you've reached old age, advance directives express your wishes regarding future medical care and assist your caretaking family in making decisions. Advance directives help express a number of fundamental values.

**“Man’s heart will determine his path”** (Mishlei 16:9) – Defining My Values and Wishes

Advance directives enable you to express your wishes about your treatment – according to your values, outlook on life, and religion. These guidelines ensure that your wishes will be fulfilled in the future and provide psychological peace in the present.

**“My son, keep your father’s commandment”** (Mishlei 6:20) – Family Unity

expressing one’s wishes early will prevent disagreement between family members regarding your treatment and prevent them from feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or hopeless if they reach a difficult and burdensome deliberation about how best to treat you. This deliberation oftentimes comes with deep pangs of consciousness. Clarifying your wishes regarding medical care removes the family’s need to make a decision and leaves your family whole and united after your passing.

**“The sage, his eyes are in his head”** (Kohelet 2:14) – Preparing for the Future

when looking to the future, advance directives will guide the medical team to avoid unwanted and suffering inducing treatments and prevent delay in providing care that requires a directive.

**“Even as I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil for You are with me”** (Tehillim 23:4) – Strengthening of Personal Resolve

It is tremendously advantageous just to bring up the topic for discussion and have a serious conversation, between partners and amongst family. In addition, providing advance directives with care and in a stepwise fashion is a tool that promotes your autonomy, managing your illness and your treatment.

## Is providing advance directives permissible according to halacha?

**Yes!** The verse that determines this is **“the heart knows the soul’s bitterness”** (Mishlei 14:10) and halacha recognizes your ability to know what treatment is best for you. The person is the deciding medical authority when determining his care since he has the deepest understanding of himself. You have the authority to determine if a certain medical treatment appeals to you, and only in extreme cases does halacha forbid or obligate a specific therapy. Therefore, it is proper and appropriate to provide advance directives. For expanded discourse, see our detailed [essay](#) on the Tzohar Ad 120 website.



## Is there no aspect of "opening one's mouth for Satan" or the impression that I am "asking" for suffering if I sign advance directives?

**No!** The response to this question was already answered thousands of years ago. When Chizkiyahu the King of Judea fell ill, Yishayahu the prophet turned to him and said, "provide a will for your house because you are dying and will not live" (Melachim II 20:1), i.e. he recommended that he command his household regarding what to do with him after he dies. As stated, there is both practical and theoretical significance and importance to instructing your caretakers regarding your wishes and values, so they will perform the proper treatment. This is similar to getting health insurance, purchasing a grave while still alive, writing a will, etc., which the greatest halachic authorities have already written do not have aspects of "opening one's mouth to Satan". For expanded discourse, read our [detailed response](#).



## How do I actually do it?

**Gradually!** Download and read the advance directive form from the [Ministry of Health](#) website and contact a certified nurse or family doctor who knows you. Dedicate time and attention to this and include your partner in the process. After filling out the guidelines, share the decisions you've made with your family.

## Why is it important to consult with 'Tzohar Ad 120' while filling out the form?

While filling out the form, many halachic and ethical questions arise. For example: is there an obligation to perform CPR or mechanical ventilation? Is there an obligation to prolong life in all cases, even at the cost of suffering and placing a tremendous burden on the family? Should I share this with my family and how should I do it? What is the approach to palliative care and pain management? Should I instruct to leave me at home and avoid taking me to the hospital under any circumstances?

We have the tools to answer your questions and guide the signer through these deliberations. Do not remain alone! We will assist you with much attention and care. Reach out to us through the [website](#) or by calling our help center **\*9253**.

To reach out to our support center, call now:  
**\*9253**

Or reach out via the website at:  
[ad120.tzohar.org.il](http://ad120.tzohar.org.il)



## Guiding Questions, Practical Advice, and Recommendations for Filling Out the Form

Below are self-guided questions that can assist you in thinking and having a personal and familial discussion throughout the process of filling out the advance directives. Dedicate attention, concentration, and thought to this process. Share your thoughts with your partner and do so gradually and not hastily.

### Core Values

- 1 | what is more important to you: quality of life or prolonging life?** (consider the following: is there something that you cannot live without? What is it? What "gifts" does your health grant you? What is it dependent on?)
- 2 | Are you interested in avoiding suffering even at the price of concentration and awareness, or would you rather stay clearheaded as much as possible?** (consider the following: how do you deal with pain nowadays and what do you expect it to be like in the future? What psychological state would you not be able to withstand and would like to avoid at all costs?)
- 3 | How important is it to you to maintain independence and functioning as much as possible?** consider the following: how important to you is it to do things independently, now and in the past? Is it important to you to be able to feed yourself until your last day? Could you withstand a situation where you would need assistance cleaning yourself and maintaining hygiene? Is it important to you to participate in communal activities?)
- 4 | How important is it to you to be at home in your final days? Would you prefer this at the price of less intensive medical care?**

### Appointing a Legal Medical Guardian

- 1 | If you are unable to make an independent decision - who is the person that you would like to be your legal guardian?** consider the following: availability, familiarity with your wishes and values, decision-making capacity and ability to remain calm in high stress, trust, and security, would he/she agree to be your legal guardian? Could they express your wishes in the appropriate fashion?)

- 2 | When your guardian makes decisions for you - how important to you is it to be a partner in making these decisions?** (consider the following: will being included help you? Is it best for your legal guardian to act according to the advice of those taking care of you? Would it help or detract from decision making in your case? Will your involvement burden the caretakers or help treat you?)

### Including the Caretaking Family

- 1 | Should you fill out a very detailed directive or leave your caretakers with some freedom to think and decide?**
- 2 | Should you instruct your family that they should be the only ones to take care of you or should you let them bring a caretaker into your home or send you to a nursing facility?**

### Recommendations for Filling Out the Form

- 1 | Halachic Counsel:** in the section "Personal Directives Not Mentioned Earlier" one can add this paragraph:

When I need to make a medical decision for myself, while being critically or terminally ill and on condition that time allows it, I hereby request to consult with "Tzohar Ad 120" and/or with a rabbi that my family/legal guardian believes is similar in his manner of ruling and halachic approach to a rabbi that I choose, and provide weight to his recommendation as if it reflects my will. I ask that my family/legal guardian invest a reasonable effort in making sure this consultation occurs as stated. If this does not help, it will not be enough to negate the power of my family/legal guardian.

- 2 |** for the complete list of recommendations, see the Tzohar Ad 120 [homepage](#).

