

DISCOVER...

HOW TO HAVE *a good life* TO THE END

ECH is passionate about supporting older Australians to live the best possible life as they age, and part of having a good life is being able to have a good death. To have a good death you need to think and plan ahead for what you may like.

People will have different views on where they may like to die and for some it may be at home, with family and friends around them.

For example, if it's your wish to die at home then it's important to have an open conversation with your family and loved ones so they are clear about your choices and can help these be fulfilled when the time comes.

Equally if you have specific funeral arrangements or a place you would like your ashes to be scattered, it is important to let your friends and family know.

Communicating your wishes not only prepares you for your own future but can also enable those around you to speak freely about their wishes so that everyone can feel more prepared.

A third of us think about death or dying at least once a week, however many people avoid having these conversations as they are not always easy. Being open and honest can often be the first step towards having a 'good' death.

The earlier you start these conversations the better, so your friends and family understand your wishes.

While you may not be in control of when it will happen, you can still make plans to ensure that your loved ones are aware of what a good death means to you.





ADVANCED CARE DIRECTIVE and POWER OF ATTORNEY

An Advanced Care Directive empowers you to make clear legal arrangements for your future health care, end-of-life care, preferred living arrangements and other personal matters¹.

The document includes information such as life goals, preferred outcomes and the treatments and care you feel comfortable with, as well as an appointed person to make these decisions on your behalf if you are unable to do so.

Your Advanced Care Directive will only be used if you are unable to make decisions about your health care, whether temporarily or permanently with all health care professionals and family members required to follow a valid directive.

Advanced Care Directives are free and can be created by filling out a form or by completing one online. Forms can also be purchased from Service SA at a cost of \$5.

You can change your Advanced Care Directive any time and should review it:

- When your preferences change
- If your substitute decision-maker changes
- If your medical conditions change²

Similar to an Advanced Care Directive, a Power of Attorney gives someone else the power to act on your behalf when it comes to legal and financial matters, such as operating your bank account.

Creating a Power of Attorney does not mean you no longer have control over your affairs, your elected person can only do things you have authorised.

There are two types of documents, General Power of Attorney and Enduring Power of Attorney. The main difference between the two is that an Enduring Power of Attorney continues to operate even though you may later become legally incapacitated, whereas a General Power of Attorney will cease when you die, or if you become legally incapacitated.

By nominating a Power of Attorney it means that if anything were to happen, you know that your financial affairs can be looked after by someone you know and trust.

You can purchase an Enduring Power of Attorney kit from the legal Services Commission or Service SA at a cost of \$22.

FAQ

frequently asked questions

Q What support can ECH provide to enable me to die at home?

There are many ways ECH supports people who wish to die at home. ECH can offer a designated Care Coordinator to support with and arrange any additional care or equipment you may require. This could include input from Specialist Palliative Care Services, Allied Health Practitioners, Nursing and Home support team members.

ECH also has specialist GP's that can work in partnership with your GP and provide home support and management of any distressing symptoms.

Spiritual, emotional and family or carer support is also available, as well as education for family members.

Following a death, ECH can provide support with funeral director contacts, official paperwork and bereavement care.

Q If I am ill, do I need to be in a hospital or is it possible to die at home?

In almost all situations it is possible to die at home if that is your wish. If ECH staff are aware of your wishes and responsible for delivering your care, they will ensure all efforts are made to fulfil your wish to die at home.

Q What does end-of-life care involve?

End-of-life care is provided in the final weeks, days and hours of life to avoid unnecessary hospital admission and includes bed-care as well as medications to make breathing comfortable, to manage pain and to alleviate distress.

ECH has a team of skilled medical, nursing and home support staff who can provide care and support for a good and respectful death at home.

Q Are there costs involved in dying at home?

There may be some costs if you choose to die at home, however these are often covered in your Home Care Package if you have one.

ECH General Practitioner costs are covered by Medicare with a no gap fee and the State Government also provides some funds to assist with care at home in the last days of life.

Q I would like to die at home if possible, how do I ensure this happens?

It is important to speak with your family and loved ones to ensure they are aware of your wishes. An initial step is to set up an Advanced Care Directive as this helps to document your choices.

¹ advancedcaredirectives.sa.gov.au
² health.gov.au



BEREAVEMENT

support and advice

HOW TO COPE WITH BEREAVEMENT

Losing someone close to you can be emotionally devastating and can affect people in different ways. It is possible to experience any range of emotions as there is no right or wrong way to feel.

Coping with the loss of a loved one is always difficult, especially if it's unexpected. It can take time to understand your feelings and adjust after the loss has happened.

Grief can be painful, exhausting and trigger a range of physical experiences and emotions such as sadness, anger, guilt and anxiety. There are many ways to help yourself through grief such as:

- Acknowledge that you will have good and bad days
- Develop coping strategies that work for you
- Create a memory box
- Understand that significant dates such as birthdays and anniversaries may trigger strong emotions

GRIEF SUPPORT SERVICES

Griefline – 1300 845 745

Dedicated grief helpline that provides free confidential telephone counselling.

Beyond Blue – 1300 224 636

Free support from trained mental health professionals 24/7, to both listen and offer advice.

Tips on how to start the conversation...

Make sure you choose the right time to have the conversation with loved ones and be patient as death can be confronting for some people. If someone is not ready to talk straight away, allow them time to sit and reflect and then approach the topic again.

If unsure of how to start this conversation, you could talk about someone who has recently died, or even use this brochure as a conversation starter to introduce the fact that you are thinking about how to have a good and respectful death at home.

Ask yourself:

- What would matter most to me at the end of my life is...
- Before I die I want to...
- I want the end of my life to be...
- Where do I want to be when I am dying?
- What interventions to prolong my life would be acceptable?

Inform others:

- What does quality of life mean to you?
- What do you want to do before you die?



ech.asn.au | 1300 275 324