

How to Appoint a Healthcare Surrogate



Kidney Community
Emergency Response

Who is a healthcare surrogate?

A healthcare surrogate is a person you give permission to make medical decisions for you when you are unable to make your own health decisions. A healthcare surrogate is someone you trust with your medical information and who will do what's best for you.

Definition from: American Bar Association, Giving Someone Power of Attorney of Your Health Care. Available at: https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/law_aging/2020-multi-state-fillable-hcpa.pdf. Accessed on 9/16/2022.

Who can be a healthcare surrogate?

A healthcare surrogate has to be 18 years of age or older. Make sure you ask the person you want to be your surrogate their age before you complete surrogate form. The person should be someone you can talk to about your wishes and who you can trust to follow your wishes.

Can I choose the kind of care I want if I am not able to tell my healthcare team myself?

Most health surrogate forms allow for you to make your own care decision ahead of time. Once you decide who you want to be your healthcare surrogate, have a conversation with him or her to make sure he or she understands what is important to you about your healthcare, what your current goals are for your care, and what values and priorities you want your surrogate to follow when making decisions for you.

What type of decisions can a healthcare surrogate make for me?

Your healthcare surrogate can help whether you want certain procedures performed, like:



CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) can help save your life during a cardiac or breathing emergency.



A ventilator is a breathing machine that pumps air into your lungs and tries to breathe for you.



A feeding tube can be used to try to feed you if you cannot swallow.

Or

Blood and water transfusions put blood and water into your body.



You must have a witness when you sign the healthcare surrogate form. The witness must:

- be 18 years of age or older.
- see you sign the form.
- not be your spouse or related to you.

Share the healthcare surrogate form with your family, friends, and medical providers. Talk with them about your medical wishes.

This document is not a legal form. It is a guide to help you talk about your health and wishes should you not be able to talk.

Considerations for a Healthcare Surrogate

Review the information below with a family member or friend. It is meant to be a guide to help you discuss your wishes should you not be able to make medical decisions on your own. Check each box and write down notes as you answer each question.

Who do you want to be your healthcare surrogate? List at least three people.

Who do you not want to help make medical decisions for you?

If you were dying, where would you want to be (for example at home or in the hospital)?
What else would be important, such as food, music, pets, or people you want around you?

If you were so sick that you may die soon, what would you prefer?

- Try all life support treatments that my doctors think might help.
- Do a trial of life support treatments that my doctors think might help. But I do not want to stay on life support treatments if the treatments do not work and there is little hope of getting better or living the life I value.
- I do not want life support treatments, and I want to focus on being comfortable.
- List any other wishes you have:

Do you want to donate your organs or body parts? Yes No
Which organs and body parts?

What funeral or burial wishes do you have?

Once you have discussed your wishes with your family, complete a health surrogate form. Share the form with your family, friends, and medical providers. To access forms to assist you in making your medical and/or final wishes, click on one of the links below.

- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP): <https://bit.ly/3eVZEuC>
- American Bar Association (ABA): <https://bit.ly/3f1fDaQ>



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