

## A Letter to My Doctor

**Dear Doctor,**

**My Doctor's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**RE: What matters most to me at the end of my life**

I have been reading and thinking about end-of-life issues lately. I realize how important it is that I communicate my wishes to you and my family. I know that you are very busy.

You may find it awkward to talk to me about my end-of-life wishes or you may feel that it is too early to have this conversation. So I am writing this letter to clarify what matters most to me.

**My Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What Matters Most to Me**

*Examples:* Being at home, doing gardening, going to church, playing with my grandchildren

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**My important future life milestones**

*Examples:* My 10<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, my grandson's high school graduation, birth of my granddaughter

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**Here is how we prefer to handle bad news in my family**

*Examples:* We talk openly about it, we shield the children from it, we do not like to talk about it, we do not tell the patient

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**Here is how we make medical decisions in our family**

*Examples:* I make the decisions myself, my entire family has to agree on major decisions about me, my daughter who is a nurse makes the decisions, etc.

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**Here is who I want making medical decisions for me when I am not able to make my own decisions**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**What I DO NOT want at the end of my life**

- I do not want to be on a breathing machine
- I do not want artificial liquid feeding
- I do not want dialysis
- I do not want to spend my last days in a hospital
- I do not want to die at home
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**What I DO WANT at the end of life**

- I want to be pain free
- I want to spend my last days in the hospital
- I want you to help me die gently and naturally
- I want to die at home
- I want hospice care
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**If my pain and distress are difficult to control, please sedate me (make me sleep with medicines) even if this means that I may die sooner**

- Yes
- No

**What to do when my family wants you to do something different than what I want for myself?**

- I am asking you to show them this letter and guide my family to follow my wishes.
- I want you to override my wishes as my family knows best.

**Other information you may want to convey**

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Please scan this letter into my medical records in a place where your colleagues can read this and be guided by it. I thank you, doctor, for listening to me now and for the future work you are about to do, guided by what matters most to me.

Your grateful patient,

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Signature

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Print Name

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Date

For more information about Advance Directives go to: [www.summitohioprobate.com](http://www.summitohioprobate.com)

Courtesy of the Stanford Letter Project: <http://med.stanford.edu/letter/about.html>