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# Advocates

Your advocates are the people who will be your public face when you cannot speak for yourself. Having more than one advocate has multiple advantages: you increase the chances having an advocate on hand in an emergency and you build in the ability for your advocates to consult and guide each other when you are not able to participate in the discussion. Your advocates' most important role is to communicate what you want in emergency medical situations, and also your wishes with regard to end-of-life care. While you will have these decisions documented, a strong advocate insures that your decisions are followed. In addition to dealing with medical decisions, your advocates will organize the communication you want as your end of life approaches.

When recruiting your advocates, try to score as many of these attributes as possible:

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knows you well           | <input type="checkbox"/> Makes friends easily*       | <input type="checkbox"/> Organized      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People management skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Not afraid to ask questions | <input type="checkbox"/> Good listener  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wins respect of others*  | <input type="checkbox"/> Cool under pressure         | <input type="checkbox"/> In good health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has time to help you     | <input type="checkbox"/> Adapts well to change       | <input type="checkbox"/> Lives near you |

Top advocate candidates:

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Discussion guideline for your first conversation with Advocates:

- Start by explaining why you want an advocate, and why you think they would be the right choice.
- Review your one-page Plan document and allow yourselves to have an open conversation about all the possible scenarios at end of life.
- Ask your advocate choice if they really want to do this. It's OK for them to say no. Your advocate has to want to be there for you.
- Plan a meeting to introduce your advocates to your internist and other key doctors. By meeting them, seeing them as your chosen advocates and understanding the detailed discussions that have taken place, your medical team will be familiar with and ready to rely on your advocates when the critical time arrives.

*\* When the going gets tough, you will encounter emergency rooms and hospital stays. Your advocate must help the staff to prioritize your needs. A person who makes friends and earns respect is more likely to achieve this than one prone to drama and blame.*