

Guidelines for Completing A Living Will

A Living Will is a legal document that states your wishes (how you want to be treated) for end-of-life care. It is different from a Will, which designates the disposition of your financial estate after you have died. These are both very important documents you should execute.

1. While you are still in good health and mind, discuss your end-of-life care with your family. Be firm in expressing YOUR wishes.
2. When appointing a Surrogate for Health Care, discuss your wishes with your designee and make certain that person will carry out your wishes. If they hesitate about this, choose another person who will carry out your wishes. Make certain that your appointed surrogate understands your wishes.
3. Don't be afraid to discuss your end-of-life care with your primary physician and any other doctors who may be treating you. You have a right to know your condition and any course of treatment suggested. You have a right to refuse or withdraw treatment. Know the options.
4. Once you have completed your Living Will, make as many copies as you will need and then sign and witness all copies in **BLUE** ink. Give a copy to each of your doctors, family members, your surrogate, your lawyer, and your spiritual advisor.
5. When completing a Living Will you may also want to have a Pre-Hospital Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Order. A physician must complete and sign the DNR Order. Discuss this matter with your doctor. (If admitted to a medical facility, you may need to complete the facility's DNR form.)
6. On October 1, 1999 the Florida Living Will was updated to include end-stage condition and persistent vegetative state, in addition to terminal illness.

REMEMBER: DO NOT put your Will or your Living Will in a safe deposit box. These documents will not be available when most needed.