



Why is Planning Necessary?

The U.S. has state-of-the-art technology and offers patients many choices for medical care. Here, you need to be an active participant in your health care decisions. Doctors demonstrate their respect for you by giving you more responsibility in making decisions. The medical team gives you information, and you, together with your doctor(s), decide what is the best option for you or your loved one.

When people are feeling well and enjoying life, it is difficult for them to think about being ill and unable to make decisions. It is understandable that many families avoid speaking about serious illness and end-of-life issues. But professionals find that people who spend some time thinking about these issues when they are healthy **reduce their worry and stress about the future and lessen the concerns of their loved ones.**



How Can You And Your American Doctor Join The Same Team?

In order to have a relationship with American doctors, you need to let them know what you want, and give them whatever information they need. (See chapter on *Communicating With Your Health Care Team*.) This is *especially important when a relative faces serious illness*. The following three chapters are called *Advance Care Planning*. They describe what discussions you should have with your family in order to tell the doctor the care you prefer at the time of serious illness. This will enable your doctor to know you better and join you as a partner in your treatment. For the best care, you need to be a team. It will also give you and your family more control over your medical care.

Advance Care Planning

Introduction

What Did We Learn From the Emigre Population?



In a special project of UJA-Federation of NY and CancerCare, professionals met with separate groups of older Russians and adult children of immigrants. Here are some of our findings: Adult children often protect their elderly parents from medical information. Yet, many elderly want to be told the truth about their illness and their treatment choices. As one older woman stated: “I want the doctor to be open and honest with me.” To help improve communication between the generations, we have developed the following 3 chapters. This information will give you a chance to have more control over your medical decisions.

How Can You Get The Best Medical Care?

We encourage parents and children to talk to one another and discuss the types of care you would prefer in times of serious illness. These conversations are gifts you can give to one another. They decrease the stress and burden that children feel when decisions have to be made in times of crisis or when loved ones are unable to make decisions for themselves. Having a plan in place in case of emergencies means that everyone can relax more in the present.

Is Talking About Serious Illness or Cancer Bad Luck?

Unfortunately, people become ill even if we don't think or talk about it. Health care professionals believe that discussing and planning for serious illness actually leads to better care and more control for you and your family. The documents in the next two chapters allow you to get your health care needs and wishes met. Speaking openly about illness leads to better decisions and better quality of life. In the words of one of our group participants, knowing the truth empowers you “to fight more for your life.”

We want you to be well for many years and to now enjoy each day to the fullest !