

PERSONAL MEDICAL PREFERENCES TEST

How well does your family, agent, or doctor know your health care wishes? This short test can give you some sense of how well you have communicated your wishes to them and may help encourage a better conversation and understanding.

The Questionnaire starts on the next page.

INSTRUCTIONS:

STEP 1: Answer the 10 questions using the Personal Medical Preferences test which follows.

STEP 2: Next, ask your health care agent, family member, or close friend to complete the Agent Understanding of Your Personal Medical Preferences test, also included in this booklet. THE QUESTIONS ARE THE SAME. Don't reveal your answers until after they take the test. They should answer the questions in the way they think you would answer. (Try the same test with your doctor, too.)

STEP 3: Grading – Count one point for each question on which you and your agent (or you and your doctor) gave the same answer.

POINTS GRADE:

10..... You are doing a great job communicating.

8 – 9..... Need some fine tuning.

6 – 7..... More discussion needed.

5 or below..... You have a lot of talking to do.

**START THE
CONVERSATION**



PERSONAL MEDICAL PREFERENCES TEST

STEP 1: Begin here and complete the questionnaire by yourself.

1. Imagine that you had Alzheimer's disease and it had progressed to the point where you could not recognize or converse with your loved ones. When spoon feeding was no longer possible, would you want to be fed by a tube into your stomach?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I am uncertain

2. Which of the following do you fear most near the end of life?

- a. Being in pain
- b. Losing the ability to think
- c. Being a financial burden on loved ones

3. Imagine that you are seriously ill, and doctors are recommending chemotherapy that usually has very severe side effects, such as pain, nausea, vomiting that could last for 2-3 months. Would you be willing to endure the side effects if the chance of regaining your current health was less than 5 percent?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I am uncertain

4. In the same scenario, suppose that your condition is clearly terminal, but the chemotherapy might give you six more months to live. Would you want the chemotherapy even though it has severe side effects (frequent pain, nausea, vomiting, and weakness)?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I am uncertain

5. If you were terminally ill with a condition that caused much pain, would you want to be sedated, even to the point of unconsciousness, if it were necessary to control your pain?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I am uncertain

6. Imagine that you have moderate dementia causing mental confusion. About half the time, you recognize and interact with friends and loved ones on a simple level. You also have circulatory problems, which resulted in one leg being amputated. Now, the other leg develops gangrene and the doctor recommends amputation because the condition could be fatal. Would you want the operation?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I am uncertain

**START THE
CONVERSATION**



7. Is it more important for you to: (a) have your specific treatment preferences followed at the end of life even if family members or friends disagree, or (b) have family and friends all in agreement and comfortable with whatever decision is made?

- a. Have specific preferences followed, even if there is disagreement
- b. Have family and friends all in agreement
- c. I am uncertain

8. Imagine that you are physically frail and need help with simple activities – dressing, bathing, eating, and toileting. You live in a nursing home, your mind is fairly clear and capable most of the time, but you have had pneumonia or other lung infections four times in the last year. Each time you had to be hospitalized for several days and given antibiotics through an I-V tube. The next time you get pneumonia, do you want aggressive antibiotic treatment again or just comfort care until death comes?

- a. Antibiotic treatment
- b. Comfort care
- c. I am uncertain

9. Imagine that you are in a permanent coma, and you are dependent on a tube inserted into your stomach for nutrition and hydration, for food and water. Would it be important to you that decisions about your treatment be guided by particular religious beliefs or spiritual values that you hold?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I am uncertain

10. If your heart, kidneys, pancreas, lungs and liver could all be used in transplant operations to save lives, would you want to donate them at death?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I am uncertain

IF YOU ARE UNCERTAIN ABOUT ANY OF YOUR CHOICES, YOU SHOULD ASK YOUR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL EXPLAIN FURTHER ABOUT SOME OF THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO YOU.

**START THE
CONVERSATION**



YOUR AGENT'S UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR MEDICAL PREFERENCES

STEP 2: Your named health care agent, family member, close friend or physician should complete the same test as you have taken. See how close the answers compare.

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer the following questions in the way you think "N" (name: _____) would answer.

1. Imagine that N had Alzheimer's disease and had progressed to the point where he/she could not recognize or converse with loved ones. When spoon feeding was no longer possible, would he/she want to be fed by the insertion of a tube into the stomach?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. N would be uncertain
2. Which of the following do you think N fears most near the end of life?
 - a. Being in pain
 - b. Losing the ability to think
 - c. Being a financial burden on loved ones
3. Imagine that N is seriously ill, and doctors are recommending chemotherapy, and this chemotherapy usually has very severe side effects, such as pain, nausea, vomiting, weakness that could last for 2-3 months. Would N be willing to endure the side effects if the chance of regaining his/her current health was less than 5 percent?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. N would be uncertain
4. In the same scenario, suppose that his/her condition is clearly terminal, but the chemotherapy might give 6 more months to live. Would N want the chemotherapy even though it has severe side effects (frequent pain, nausea, vomiting, and weakness)?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. N would be uncertain
5. If N were terminally ill with a condition that caused much pain, would N want to be sedated, even to the point of unconsciousness, if it were necessary to control the pain?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. N would be uncertain

Continued on next page

**START THE
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6. Imagine that N has moderate dementia causing mental confusion. About half the time, N recognizes and interacts with friends and loved ones on a simple level. N also has circulatory problems, which resulted in one leg being amputated. Now, the other leg develops gangrene and the doctor recommends amputation because the condition could be fatal. Would N want the operation?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. N would be uncertain

7. Is it more important for N to: (a) have his/her specific treatment preferences followed at the end of life even if family members or friends disagree, or (b) have family and friends all in agreement and comfortable with whatever decision is made?

- a. Have specific preferences followed, even if there is disagreement
- b. Have family and friends all in agreement
- c. N would be uncertain

8. Imagine that N is physically frail and needs help with most simple activities – dressing, bathing, eating, toilet. N lives in a nursing home, is mentally, is fairly clear and capable most of the time, but has had pneumonia or other lung infections four times in the last year. Each time N had to be hospitalized for several days and given antibiotics through an I-V tube. The next time N gets pneumonia, do you think he/she would want aggressive antibiotic treatment again or just comfort care until death comes?

- a. Antibiotic treatment
- b. Comfort care
- c. N would be uncertain

9. Imagine that N is in a permanent coma, and is dependent on a tube inserted into the stomach for nutrition and hydration, for food and water. Would it be important to N that decisions about N's treatment be guided by particular religious beliefs or spiritual values held by N?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. N would be uncertain

10. If N's heart, kidneys, pancreas, lungs, and liver could all be used in transplant operations to save lives, would he/she want to donate them at death?

- a. Yes
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- c. N would be uncertain

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