

PREPARING TO TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR

- ❑ **Call your doctor's office ahead of time and let them know of your interest in discussing advance care planning at an upcoming appointment.**
- ❑ **Become familiar with common medical terms that might come up during your conversation.**
This may include terminology associated with your specific illness and common language related to end-of-life care. Refer to the list of common terms found with Conversation Starter Kit and the glossary in the Taking Steps booklet.
- ❑ **Prepare your thoughts and concerns about end-of-life care. Consider using one or more of these resources and suggestions:**
 - Review the information and worksheets in the Conversation Guide and Taking Steps booklets.
 - Write your thoughts and concerns in a letter to your doctor.
 - Make a list of questions that you or your family have discussed.
 - Bring a copy of the Vermont Advance Directive for Health Care form with you.
- ❑ **Invite your health care agent and/or a friend or family member to join you for the visit.**
 - If your health care agent does not live in the area, consider asking a friend or family member to join you and let them know how you want them to help with your discussion.
- ❑ **Consider some specific questions to help you understand the options for your health condition. Sample questions may include:**
 - I don't understand what you're saying. Can you explain it to me differently?
 - What are some possible changes in my health that my family and I should be prepared for?
 - Should I be diagnosed with a serious illness, what role will my primary care physician play?
- ❑ **Recognize that one conversation may not be enough and that you may need to schedule a follow-up visit with your doctor or a member of your health care team.**
Some scenarios that may require you to have the conversation again with your health care team or revisit the conversation with your loved ones are:
 - I have unanswered questions / concerns.
 - My health care agent disagrees with my wishes.
 - I am attempting to support someone who is no longer able to discuss his or her wishes.

**START THE
CONVERSATION**

GET A CONVERSATION STARTER KIT AT
STARTTHECONVERSATIONVT.ORG

START THE CONVERSATION IS A PUBLIC EDUCATION
INITIATIVE OF THE VNAS OF VERMONT, YOUR NONPROFIT
HOME HEALTH AND HOSPICE AGENCIES.