

Hospice of San Joaquin

Advance Directive Planning

Life Support Defined

Life support means any machine or medication that is needed to keep you alive. This usually includes a ventilator, which involves a tube that goes down the throat that is connected to a machine that pushes air into the lungs. It can also include things like feeding tubes, kidney dialysis, and intravenous lines for medication. Once life support is started it can always be stopped if it looks like it is not helping or not what you would have wanted. If you have any questions about what life support is or what kinds of things you may need to consider in particular, please ask your doctor.

Consider the following questions

If you had a serious illness (like pneumonia) that temporarily required life support to cure you, and your doctors thought they could get you better, would you want life support?

_____Yes _____No _____Unsure _____Leave it up to my doctor and loved ones

If you were most likely *not going to recover* and would die at some point on the machines (for example, permanent coma or lung failure, being kept alive on machines but would never get off), would you want life support?

_____Yes _____No _____Unsure _____Leave it up to my doctor and loved ones

If you developed a condition like advanced Alzheimer’s disease or a severe stroke and eventually became unable to talk with others or enjoy life, would you want life support treatments that would prolong your life (like antibiotics for pneumonia or tube feedings for the inability to swallow)?

_____Yes _____No _____Unsure _____Leave it up to my doctor and loved ones

IMPORTANT: Be sure to talk with your Power of Attorney agents and loved ones about your wishes. Knowing your wishes will make it much easier for them if and when these types of decisions need to be made.

Adapted from Kaiser Permanente “Medical Care Preferences”