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The Kidney Connection

Week 4: Planning ahead for your care

As kidney disease progresses, you may have to make important choices about your care. Thinking about these choices early can help you make decisions that feel right for you.

Why planning ahead matters

Planning ahead can help you:

- Understand your treatment options
- Share your wishes with your care team and family
- Feel more prepared and less stressed
- Make sure your care matches what matters most to you

Start with what matters most

These questions can help you think about what's important

- What do I understand about my kidney disease?
- What do I think will happen as my health changes?
- What do I hope for in my care?
- What matters most in my life right now?
- What worries me most about my health?
- What does good quality of life mean to me?
- What does a good day look like for me?
- Which activities or abilities are most important to me?

Understanding your care options

As kidney disease progresses, your care may change based on your needs and goals. Two types of supportive care to know about are palliative care and hospice care.

Palliative Care

- Focuses on helping you feel as well as possible
- Can be given at any stage of illness
- Can be provided while you are still receiving treatments like dialysis
- Helps manage pain, symptoms, and stress

Hospice Care

- Focuses on comfort and support when treatment is no longer the goal
- Usually begins when someone may have about six months or less to live
- Focuses on comfort rather than curing illness
- Usually does not include dialysis under Medicare

You Are Not Alone

These decisions are deeply personal—and you don't have to make them alone. Your care team, family, and support system are here to:

- Answer your questions
- Help you understand your choices
- Support you in making choices that feel right for you

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03/26