

# Health Care Decisions IQ Test

## For Family, Physician, or Health Care Agent

How well does your family, physician, or health care agent know your health care wishes? This short test can give you some sense of how well you have communicated your wishes. Consider this a tool to promote conversation and increase the likelihood that your end-of-life wishes will be honored.

### Instructions:

1. Make as many copies as needed, one for you and everyone you want to take the test. Save this original, if desired, so that you can use it in the future.
2. Answer the questions yourself and don't reveal your answers.
3. Ask your family member, physician, or health care agent to take the test. They should answer the questions in the way they think *you* would answer.
4. Compare your answers to test taker's answers. Count one point for each question on which you and the test taker gave the same answer. Their Health Care Decisions IQ is rated as follows:
  - **5 points** = Superior; you have done a great job communicating your wishes.
  - **4 points** = Good, but you need some fine-tuning.
  - **3 points** = Fair, but more discussion is needed.
  - **1 or 2 points** = Poor; you have some talking to do.

1. You are 91 years old and have been in failing health for a few years. You spend most of your day in bed and you need care 24 hours a day because of your dementia. You easily forget who your friends and family are when they come to visit. You have begun to lose interest in eating, and you have lost a lot of weight. You are physically comfortable and generally in good spirits. The doctor is talking about a feeding tube so that you can get adequate nutrition. *Would you want the tube?*

**a. Yes      b. No      c. Uncertain**

2. You have late-stage Alzheimer's disease and can neither recognize nor converse with your family or other loved ones. You been diagnosed with pneumonia that will become fatal unless it is treated with antibiotics. *Would you want antibiotics?*

**a. Yes      b. No      c. Uncertain**

3. You have been found after having a heart attack, and you have no heartbeat and are not breathing. Emergency medical providers revive you, and you are now in intensive care, unconscious, and connected to a breathing machine. After a few days of tests, doctors know you were deprived of oxygen to the brain for several minutes during the heart attack, and you have brain damage. Your doctors do not think you will wake up. If you do, you may eventually be able to get off the breathing machine, but it's likely – although not certain – that you will need help with everything, including dressing, eating, and toileting. *Would you want the breathing machine continued?*

**a. Yes      b. No      c. Uncertain**

4. You have congestive heart failure that causes your lungs to fill up with fluid; your health is poor; and you are unable to walk around one block. You are always short of breath and tired all the time, but you are alert and able to enjoy time with family and friends. One day you have a heart attack and your heart stops beating. *Would you want CPR started and 9-1-1 called?*

**a. Yes      b. No      c. Uncertain**

5. You have advanced liver cancer that has spread to your bones and internal organs. You are at home and receiving hospice care. You cannot leave your bed or move too much because activity increases the pain, which, despite large doses of pain medication, is getting worse. You are so heavily medicated that you are in and out of consciousness, but, when you are conscious, you can still recognize and talk to your family. The hospice nurse has offered something called palliative sedation to manage your pain, where you would be sedated to unconsciousness until death occurs, but your family must approve it. *Would you want palliative sedation?*

**a. Yes      b. No      c. Uncertain**