

Advance Decision to Refuse Treatment (ADRT)



*"Knowing that I won't be kept alive if I've reached the stage where my body is shutting down is a great relief for me, and it's good to know that my family know exactly what I want."
Neil, fit and healthy, 66 years old.*

What is an ADRT?

An Advance Decision to Refuse Treatment allows you to write down any treatments that you don't want to have in the future. This will only come into force if you lose capacity to make your own choices.

Should I have an ADRT?

If there are circumstances in which you would not wish to be kept alive, an ADRT ensures that your medical team will follow your wishes, regardless of others' opinions.

Who can help me with this if necessary?

It is advisable to discuss this with a healthcare professional; they may have a form on which to record your decisions or there are online resources to create your own, see below.

Is an ADRT a legal document?

An ADRT is legally binding if you have signed it, had your signature witnessed and have met other considerations. See link under Further Reading for more information.

Other names for an ADRT

Living Will, Advance Directive

An ADRT is legally binding and must be respected by those providing your medical care even if other people believe it is not in your best interests.

You cannot use an ADRT to demand specific treatments or ask for assistance to end your life.

Examples of circumstances in which you may wish treatments to be withheld or withdrawn:

- If you have an incurable and irreversible terminal condition that will result in your death within a relatively short time

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contd.

- If you are diagnosed as persistently unconscious and, to a reasonable degree of medical certainty, will not regain consciousness
- If you are diagnosed as being severely and permanently mentally impaired

If you have a condition like dementia, you may want to be specific about the circumstances in which you wish to refuse life-sustaining treatment. For example, if you are unaware of your surroundings, are unable to recognise people close to you, are persistently anxious or agitated, are unable to attend to your personal hygiene, are unable to swallow, are unable to interact with others, or other circumstances.

Examples of specific treatments you may wish to refuse:

- Life support or other life-prolonging treatment
- Tube feeding
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation in the event of cardiac arrest
- Active treatment for a separate condition unless it appears to cause you undue suffering

Remember that your Advance Decision will only come into effect if you lack capacity. If you are still able to make decisions about medical treatment, your Advance Decision will not apply.



Further reading:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/end-of-life-care/advance-decision-to-refuse-treatment/>



Action List

- Use the planner on the following page to make a note of your current thinking
- Have a conversation with a healthcare professional and/or solicitor
- Complete the form they provide or create your ADRT online with My Living Will: <https://www.mylivingwill.org.uk/>
- Ask your GP to a) keep a copy of your ADRT with your medical records and b) refer to it in your Summary Care Record.
- See the Factsheet on page 57 for options available to store and share your documents.



Advance Decision to Refuse Treatment Planner

My name: _____	My date of birth: _____
My address: _____	

In the following circumstances (see pages 33-34):

I wish to refuse the following specific treatments (see page 34):

(if you wish to refuse a treatment that is or may be life-sustaining, you will need to state: 'I am refusing this treatment even if my life is at risk as a result'.)

For the avoidance of doubt, you might state that you wish to receive medical treatment for any symptoms such as violent or degrading behaviour or if you appear to be in pain, even if that should worsen your physical condition or shorten your life.

You will need to:

- a) talk through the options with a healthcare professional
- b) complete a form and sign
- c) have your signature witnessed.