Planning your care - “Just in case”

If you become too ill to answer for yourself, WHO would you want to speak on your behalf? Have you told that person what your wishes are?

Do you ever think…

"I don't want to go into hospital, do I have a choice?"

Many community services allow care in your own home to avoid hospital admission. This is easier when pre-planned.

"Would I be kept alive against my wishes?"

Before you are unable to speak for yourself, tell your family and GP- you can specify at what stage you would want to refuse life-sustaining treatment.

"What if I want every treatment going to keep me alive?"

The success of any treatment depends on your other health conditions. Speak to your GP about what would be best for you.

"What if I've already said I don't want to be resuscitated?"

There are lots of treatment options leading up to this final point that may be appropriate. Discuss these with your GP or community nurse.

"My family know what I want; do I need to spell it out again?"

You need to have a proper discussion with them; otherwise it can be unclear & stressful for your family members when the time comes.

“When I die I want it to be in comfort and dignity, ideally at home”

Developing an advance care plan and sharing it with health care professionals allows us to focus on what matters most to you.

Helpful Suggestions overleaf...

Advance Care Plans & the ReSPECT Form

Both of these can be used to clarify your wishes if you were to become very unwell in future. This may be a quick onset illness or a gradual decline.

They simply tell the medical professionals, your family and carers about what you want to happen in various situations, particularly if you are too unwell to talk.

For example, you may prefer to be looked after in hospital, if you were very unwell, but not wish to be put on a life support machine. Or you may prefer to be cared for at home.

It is important to pass on your preferences clearly.

It is very useful for all medical professionals to know your wishes in advance so that they can be followed as closely as possible.

What to do next?

Think through what care you would like to receive if you are taken seriously ill, jot it down and discuss this with your family.

A couple of helpful websites: https://mydecisions.org.uk/ and www.thecommunicationproject.org

Once decided, arrange to see someone you know and trust at your GP surgery to discuss these wishes so they can be added to your online Summary Care Record.

A written ReSPECT form is an ideal way to record your wishes. More information: https://www.resus.org.uk/respect/patients-and-carers/

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