

# Health Care Power of Attorney

A **medical care power of attorney** is a document that appoints someone else to make decisions regarding your medical care. Another name for this document is called **durable power of attorney for health care**. You should know the law regarding this document because of its importance.

## Reasons for a Medical Power of Attorney

If your health declines to the state that you can no longer communicate with others, the person named in your medical power of attorney will communicate for you. This communication can be to your doctors and other health care providers.

Preparing a medical power of attorney lets you control, at least to some degree, the health care you'll receive when you're unable to do so directly. The person named in your medical power of attorney is usually referred to as your agent.

## Choosing a Medical Agent

Choosing the right medical agent is very important. You need to choose someone that you trust. This person should know your religious beliefs, can easily talk to your doctors and won't hesitate to act on your behalf. Your agent needs to have adequate time to spend seeing you get the health care you prefer.

It's a good idea to name an alternate agent who can step in if for any reason your main agent can't serve.

## Matters Your Medical Power of Attorney Should Cover

Among other things, your medical power of attorney should state::

- Whether you want aggressive health care if you have a long, chronic illness
- Whether you want to be resuscitated if you have an illness causing severe dementia
  - Any medical treatments you have a religious objection to

## Preparing a Medical Power of Attorney

Each state has its own laws regarding the matter. Many states and colleges have medical power of attorney forms that you can download for free. For example, here's one for [Illinois](#) and another for [Ohio](#).

## Terminating a Medical Power of Attorney

Your medical power of attorney is indefinite unless it has a specific termination date, you revoke it or you become reasonably healthy. To revoke an indefinite one, you need to give notice to your agent and your health care provider. Also, some state laws say if you name your spouse as agent, a divorce automatically revokes it..

## Who Can't be an Agent

Due to concern about conflicts of interest, most laws prohibit your medical provider and its employees from being named an agent..

## Questions for Your Attorney

- Can I name multiple people to represent me as agents?
- Should I have an attorney write the medical care power of attorney document or should I do it myself?
  - Do I need witnesses to make the document valid?

*Courtesy of Lawyers.com*