Five Wishes® at Home

Use these “Stay-at-Home” COVID-19 days to have an important talk with the people who are most important to you

The coronavirus has shown us how quickly things can change around us, and how important it is to communicate and share what matters most in advance of a health crisis. It has reminded us all to consider what we want our loved ones to know about us, and what we want to know about them, and that advance care planning is relevant to everyone. As friends and families are following instructions to “stay-at-home” to stop the spread of the coronavirus, they are also using the time for some very good and important conversations.

Five Wishes can help guide you as you have these important conversation and to create a document that meets legal requirements.

Think about and decide:

- Who you trust to make healthcare decisions for you if you’re unable to speak for yourself.
- What types of life-support treatment you would want or not want, and in which situations.
- What makes you feel comfortable—a cool cloth on your forehead, to be massaged, to have your lips kept moist, among other things?
- How you want to be treated—Would you like people with you if possible, and if so, who? If someone can’t be with you in person, would you like to talk with them by phone or video chat? What would bring comfort—photos of loved ones, sacred readings or poems, music, rosary or prayer beads, an important religious or cultural item to hold or wear?
- What is important for others to know—what’s too important to leave unsaid? You may want to express love or forgiveness, or say how you would want to be remembered.

Here are a few suggestions on how you can help your family, your close friends, or your neighbors with Five Wishes.

1. Choose which format of Five Wishes you prefer. It’s available as a paper document or in digital format that can be completed online. It’s available in 29 languages.

2. Get familiar with Five Wishes yourself. Some people like to look through the document first so they feel comfortable talking about it. Others like to complete Five Wishes for themselves first and then talk about it with family and friends. It can help if you start with your own wishes first because it doesn’t put the other person in the hot seat, and they know you are not asking them to consider something that you have not first considered for yourself.

You don’t need any special training or expertise to lead this discussion. YOU ARE THE EXPERT in what is important to you.
3. **Set the table** (or set the context). Think about who is most important to you—your parents, adult children, siblings, grandparents, extended family, close friends—or your neighbors, co-workers or people at your church or place of worship.
   • Tell them you’ve been thinking about what would be important to know during a health crisis, that you found Five Wishes, and you’d like to share it.
   • Explain that we hope no one needs to put Five Wishes into practice immediately, but lots of families are taking time during the days of the coronavirus to have these important talks.

4. **Talk about it, and complete Five Wishes.** While social distancing, gather your friends or family in a way that lends itself to a discussion—at home or connecting virtually. Talk through the wishes and what you and your loved ones think and feel, and discuss your preferences. Make sure the person you chose as your Healthcare Agent is part of the discussion. After you’ve talked about and completed Five Wishes, be sure to sign it and, if possible while observing physical distancing, have it witnessed. Your witness can be a neighbor or anyone who meets the requirements on page 10 of Five Wishes. If witnessing is not possible, make sure to share the documents with people who matter to you by email or some other safe method (see the next bullet).

5. **Make it easy to find your Five Wishes.** After you complete Five Wishes, make copies of your completed document. If you can’t make copies, you can also take a photo of each page on your phone or other device. If you have a Google drive, iCloud, OneDrive, Dropbox, or other file sharing app, you can save your Five Wishes there and send people a link. You could also use a national repository like [www.mydirectives.com/fivewishes](http://www.mydirectives.com/fivewishes). The most important thing is to make your Five Wishes available. Don’t put it in a safe deposit box or in a locked cabinet. Tell your family where it is, and make it accessible. If a person needs to go to the hospital or requires urgent care, be sure to bring their completed Five Wishes or send it with them.

*These days are reminding us of the importance of taking good care of one another. And, if we want to take good care of one another, we need to know some important information. That’s where Five Wishes helps you.*

**Need help?** If you have any questions or need more material, call 1-888-594-7437 or send us a note at info@FiveWishes.org.

**Have a story to share?** Let us know how this conversation plays out in your home. We love learning from you.