



**Advanced Decisions to Refuse Treatment (ADRT)
Information for patients, families and carers**



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What is an Advanced Decision to Refuse Treatment

If you are 18 years or over, an Advance Decision to Refuse Treatment (ADRT) is a written instruction to refuse or withdraw specific treatments, under precise circumstances in the future.

In England and Wales, this is a legally binding document, as long as it has been completed correctly. In England and Wales an ADRT is legally binding, but can only be actioned if you lose the ability to make or communicate decisions for yourself.

You must be able to make and communicate reasoned decisions when you sign the ADRT for it to be valid (known as having mental capacity, as governed by the Mental Capacity Act 2005).

Do I have to have an ADRT?

Whether or not to have an ADRT is your choice. This will depend on your outlook and how discussions with your family and professionals inform your views. If this feels too difficult, you can still write down your general preferences in an Advanced Care Plan.

As your ADRT only becomes valid if you become unable to make or communicate decisions, you can make whatever choices feel right for you in the meantime, even if different to those in the ADRT.

Who needs to know about my ADRT?

It is extremely important to ensure everyone involved in your care is aware of your ADRT, including:

- Your carer, partner, and close relatives and friends
- Your GP and key members of your health and social care team
- The person you have appointed as attorney, if you have Lasting Power of Attorney or Enduring Power of Attorney in

Your original signed ADRT should be easily accessible. If the ADRT is needed, the original may be required by health and social care professionals for them to act upon your wishes. It is helpful to keep a list of everyone that has a copy. Sometimes people wear a bracelet or carry a card informing people that they have an ADRT and listing who has a copy.

What happens if I change my mind?

As your views, circumstances, illness and treatment may change, it is useful to review the ADRT on a regular basis. If you make any changes to your ADRT, you need to inform everyone that has a copy and ask them to destroy the previous version.

Even if you have not made any changes, add a date and signature to record when it was last reviewed or revised. Copies of the updated version can then be distributed to the people that hold the ADRT.

How do I make and record decisions in an ADRT?

If the ADRT is not completed correctly, it will not be valid. This means it will not be legally binding and your wishes may not be carried out. Before creating an ADRT, discuss the contents with your health and social care team to ensure:

- You are clear about which treatments you wish to decline
- You understand the possibility of discomfort and putting your life at risk
- You complete the ADRT form correctly.

What details have to be included in an ADRT?

The document can be handwritten or typed in any format. It can also be completed by someone else if you are unable to do this yourself.

However, for your ADRT to be valid, it must include the following:

- Your name and address
- The name and address of your GP
- A clear statement about which future treatments you want to refuse or have withdrawn and the precise circumstances in which this would apply

- A declaration that your decisions apply, ‘even if my life is at risk’ by refusing a treatment that may be life sustaining
- Your signature or the signature of another person on your behalf, carried out in your presence and under your direction
- The dated signature of at least one witness over the age of 18 - ideally not a partner, spouse, relative, anyone who stands to benefit under your will or your appointed representative for a Lasting Power of Attorney
- The name, address and telephone number of any person you have nominated to be consulted about your wishes names of those who have copies (e.g. doctor, hospital, family, ambulance service)
- If you change your ADRT, the new version should also show the review dates with a signature.

What decisions can be included in an ADRT?

You can refuse or request withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment if it is no longer helping, or has become a burden.

For example, this may include instructions about:

- Refusal or withdrawal of mechanical breathing support
- Refusal or withdrawal of tube feeding
- Refusal of antibiotics
- Not wishing to be resuscitated in an emergency (this will usually be communicated via a separate DNACPR form).

What decisions cannot be included in an ADRT?

An ADRT cannot be used to:

- Decline basic nursing care required to keep you comfortable
- Request anything, such as medication, to deliberately cause or accelerate death
- Ask for new treatments to begin
- Determine what should happen following your death (an ADRT is not a will).

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