

**WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for January 10, 2021**  
**Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.**

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, and Healthy Relationships we'll talk about advance directives and some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

The beginning of a new year is an opportunity to consider those things you have been putting off. I heard last week that two of the greatest gifts you can give the next generation are organized, digitized photos and your advance care directives. If you are like 70 percent of Americans, then you are without an advance care plan. Advance directives provide you with the opportunity to express your end-of-life wishes in writing.

Every adult, no matter how young or how old, should consider advance care planning. This includes what you want to happen if you are not able to make your own medical decisions. There are some key parts to advance care planning including designating a Health Care Power of Attorney and completing advance directives like a Living Will, donor registry, and declaration for funeral arrangements.

The Conversation Project from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement has a helpful resource available called "How to Choose a Health Care Proxy." A health care proxy is also known as a health care agent or power of attorney for health care. This person is the one who will speak for you when you are unable to speak for yourself. This resource walks you through several things to consider in choosing a person and how to have the conversation with them.

Another excellent resource is from The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center called "Choices: Living Well at the End of Life." Because this is an Ohio specific publication, it contains forms that can be completed here in Ohio. It also clearly explains the differences between a Health Care Power of Attorney and a Living Will. A Health Care Power of Attorney provides an agent with the authority to make health care decisions on your behalf, access your records, set up appointments, choose which doctors see you, and more. This is different from a Financial Power of Attorney, which allows a person of your choosing to make financial decisions on your behalf when you are unable to make them.

A Living Will is only used in situations when you are unable to tell your physician what kind of health care services you want to receive. For it to go into effect, you must be terminally ill and unable to tell your physician your wishes or permanently unconscious. A Living Will may include a Do-Not-Resuscitate (DNR) Order for a person who does not wish to have cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). It may also include wishes about comfort care and nutrition and hydration. A Living Will takes precedence over a Health Care Power of Attorney.

It is a good idea to have both documents, as they each address different aspects of your care. Any document you sign must be in accordance with the specific language spelled out in the Ohio Revised Code. You can obtain standard forms online that you can complete and have notarized. You may also consult with an attorney for assistance.

I have compiled links to these resources and more at [coshocton.osu.edu](http://coshocton.osu.edu) under the “Family and Consumer Sciences” section. Look for “Health Care Decisions” to learn more.

I really appreciate this quote from Jodi Picoult: “Have a conversation with your family about your end-of-life wishes while you are healthy. No one wants to have that discussion... but if you do, you'll be giving your loved ones a tremendous gift, since they won't have to guess what your wishes would have been, and it takes the onus of responsibility off of them.”

I also want you to know about some upcoming programs from OSU Extension. A “Beating the Winter Blues” webinar series continues this Friday, January 15 from 11:00-11:30 AM with Beat the Blues by Unplugging. Future topics include Beat the Blues with Exercise and Beat the Blues with Humor. This is a free online program, and you can sign up on our website [coshocton.osu.edu](http://coshocton.osu.edu).

And the “East Ohio Women in Agriculture Program Series” begins this Thursday with a Farm Tax Update. A total of 10 webinars and 3 field days will be held January through May on a variety of financial, production, and home-related topics to help women in agriculture. Attend one or all programs in the series! Visit our website to register for one or more of these free programs.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at [coshocton.osu.edu](http://coshocton.osu.edu). Make it a healthy day!