What is a medical power of attorney?

A medical power of attorney (POA) is a legal document that allows you to select a person to make healthcare decisions for you if you are unable to do so. This person, known as your healthcare agent, has the authority to make decisions about your medical care as you would have made them if you were able. The agent is appointed by a living will or by a separate document.

Who should I select to be my medical power of attorney?

You should select someone you trust, such as a close family member or good friend who understands your values and is capable of making healthcare decisions for you. Your agent should be someone you are comfortable talking about your healthcare choices with. You should select someone who understands your wishes and who will act in your best interests. You should also make sure your agent can handle the responsibilities of being your healthcare agent.

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What is a do-not-resuscitate (DNR) order?

A DNR order is a legal document that tells healthcare providers not to use CPR or other medical procedures that would sustain life. It does not affect other medical procedures, such as the use of machines to monitor vital signs, the use of drugs to manage pain, or the use of ventilators.

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A living will is a legal document that allows you to plan and make decisions at the end of your life. It is also known as an advance directive. A living will goes into effect when your physician declares that you are no longer able to make decisions for yourself.

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