

# HEALTH MATTERS

## DO YOU HAVE A 'WHAT IF' PLAN?

If you suddenly became seriously unwell, what sort of health care treatment would you want? And who would you want making decisions **if you couldn't speak for yourself**?

Advance care planning involves thinking about your future and end-of-life care and sharing this information so your loved ones and health care team can provide what's important to you.

- An advance care plan: outlines what medical treatment you want if you had an accident or life-threatening illness
- includes information about the type of care you want including where you'd like to be cared for
- details who you would want making decisions if you couldn't speak for yourself
- is different from an enduring power of attorney as it outlines what you want this person to do and the decisions they can make.

It's not easy to think or talk about being unwell or dying, but it's an important conversation to have now, before you need it.

An advance care plan relieves your family of the burden of making decisions for you if you can't make these for yourself.

There is lots of information available to help you prepare a plan. Contact your general practice or visit [www.advancecareplanning.org.nz](http://www.advancecareplanning.org.nz).

## MELANOMA AWARENESS MONTH

### Do you know how to do a skin check?

Checking your skin regularly (including skin not normally exposed to the sun) will help you get to know how your skin normally looks so you can be aware of any changes. This is especially important as you get older, particularly if you are over the age of 50.

Make sure you check your entire body, as skin cancers can sometimes occur on parts of your body that are not exposed to the sun.

Take the following steps to check your skin:

- Use a hand-held mirror or ask for help from someone else to check hard-to-see areas, such as your back and neck.
- Check underneath your armpits, inner legs, ears, eyelids, hands and feet.
- Use a comb to move sections of hair aside and check your scalp.

If you notice any skin changes, show your doctor **DON'T WAIT – ACT NOW!**

For further information on the types of skin cancer, whom is most at risk and how to prevent it go to the Cancer Society's website: [www.cancernz.org.nz/reducing-your-cancerrisk](http://www.cancernz.org.nz/reducing-your-cancerrisk) or [www.healthnavigator.org.nz](http://www.healthnavigator.org.nz)

## Are you living well with diabetes?

How about enrolling in a **FREE** self-management programme?

You'll get helpful information, discussion with others who have diabetes, opportunity to put an action plan into place, and much more.

Talk to your health provider about a referral or contact the facilitator Mary Hirini for more information and to enrol.

Phone/text 029 222 5388 or email [mhirini@wrhn.org.nz](mailto:mhirini@wrhn.org.nz)

# 1

Home  
(Self Care)

## UNWELL OR INJURED?

### Where should I be?

# 2

General  
Practice (GP)  
& After Hours

- Call Healthline 0800 611 116 – for free medical advice 24hrs/day.
- Home for rest, regular fluids and pain relief, if required.
- Talk to your pharmacist – they are a good source of information.
- Contact your general practice team first.
- For urgent or after hours care, contact your general practice in the first instance for advice. Or visit the Whanganui Accident & Medical (WAM) service located at Whanganui Hospital. Open every day from 8am-9pm.
- Emergency Department for emergencies.

# 3

Emergency (ED)

