

## What does it mean to give powers to your health care agent?

You have the legal power to make decisions about your health care. You can make decisions about whether you want treatment or want to stop treatment. You can look at your medical records. You can sign forms at the doctor's office. These are just a few examples of the many powers you have. But when you are unable to make informed decisions about your health care, you cannot use your powers very well or at all. Instead, your agent will need to have the powers so that he or she can take your place during that time. The powers on the advance directive form are the main ones that your agent might need.

If you do not select an agent, the law will automatically appoint your spouse or closest blood relative to make health care decisions for you when you cannot. If this happens, the law grants all the powers below except visitation rights.

Power 1	<p>The 1st power lets your agent say “yes,” “no,” or “stop” to treatments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Treatments include anything from basic pain medicine up to machines used for end-of-life care. If there are treatments that you have strong feelings about, then you should write that down in the instructions section of your AD and talk with your agent. That way your agent can say “yes,” “no,” or “stop” just as you would have said if you could.</li> </ul>
Power 2	<p>The 2nd power lets your agent look over your health care records. It also lets your agent share your records with other doctors to help with your care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your agent only gets to look at information that is related to the health care you need. Privacy laws still protect personal records like psychotherapy notes.</li> </ul>
Power 3	<p>The 3rd power lets your agent hire and fire health care providers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For example, your agent could hire another doctor to get a second opinion.</li> </ul>
Power 4	<p>The 4th power lets your agent say “yes” or “no” to where your health care takes place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For example, when your doctor says you are ready to go from the hospital to a rehab facility, then your agent could say “yes” or “no.”</li> </ul>
Power 5	<p>The 5th power is about treatment in a mental health hospital. It lets your agent say “yes” or “no” when doctors suggest that you need to go to a mental health hospital.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If your agent says “yes,” then you can be taken to the mental health hospital for up to 10 days. At the end of 10 days, health care providers will decide whether you need to stay for more time or not.</li> </ul>
Power 6	<p>The 6th power protects you from firing your agent while you are <u>not</u> able to make decisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can always fire or change your agent while you are able to make decisions.</li> </ul>
Powers 7 & 8	<p>The 7th and 8th powers are about research. They let your agent say “yes” or “no” when there is a research study that wants to include you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Power 7 is about research that might benefit you, like a new medication.</li> <li>Power 8 is about research that will not benefit you but will increase understanding or human well-being in the future.</li> </ul>
Power 9	<p>The 9th power lets your agent control who visits you based on your instructions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your agent will follow any details you give about who can and cannot visit you.</li> <li>Virginia law does not allow agents to make visitation choices unless you grant this power.</li> <li>Other laws and regulations may limit an agent's power to make visitation decisions.</li> </ul>
Power 10	<p>The last power lets your agent do the things needed to make your decisions happen, like sign forms.</p>