



## Faith Health Initiative

### What to Pack? Preparing for Our Journey to Heaven

When you consider your last moments on earth, do you have fear, excitement, or anxiety? Perhaps, you have all of these. We often are apprehensive about the unknown but when it comes to heaven, there are some things we do know!

**None of the bad stuff!** Revelation 21:4 (ESV) “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” In heaven, we won’t be burdened with the sadness of this world and we won’t have the limitations of the physical body that include pain.

**It’s our last stop!** John 10:28 (NKJV) “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.” Heaven is a place where we are infinitely tied to God, never to be separated or bothered with death again.

**We will get an awesome new body!** Philippians 3:21 ESV “Who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.” God has thought of everything, including removing the weakness of our flesh by giving us a new body that is like his!

Despite the promises God gave about heaven, we still have some anxiety.

I recently flew to California for a vacation that our family had planned for over a year. I knew it would be an amazing trip and an opportunity to spend quality time with those I love, but I still had some jitters. Would I forget something? Would the flight go well? Would the weather cooperate? Heaven is much the same way. We have complete faith that God will deliver on his promises but getting there gives us some uneasiness.

Here are a few suggestions to make sure the trip goes well.

**Plan your accommodations.** Everyone dies, yet most are afraid to discuss it. If you could pick the best environment and conditions for your passing, what would they be? Would you want to be at home? Do you want a crowd around you or just a few people in the room at a time? Do you have a favorite song or scripture that you want to hear? Is your preference to be pain free or do you want to be more alert? You may not get the chance to decide any of these things, but you might. It’s worth it to have an honest discussion with those you love to ensure your wishes are met up until the end.



**Print Directions.** An advance directive is written instructions that provide information on future medical treatment. An advance directive allows *you* to decide who will make medical decisions when you can’t speak for yourself. If you want, you may use an advance directive to *prevent* certain people from making health care decisions on your behalf. **Advance directives DO NOT take away your right to decide your care, as long as you are able to express your wishes.** This is true even in the most serious of medical conditions. Your advance directive will only be used when you are unable to communicate or when you no longer have mental competence, which only a physician decides. If you do not have an advance directive, and you are unable to choose medical treatment, Indiana law will decide who can do this for you. This responsibility will fall to any member of your immediate family (parent, spouse, adult child, brother, sister). If you never communicated your wishes, family members are left to guess what you would want. This often leads to bitter disputes, misunderstandings, and permanent relationship strain.



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Advance directives cover a variety of topics including:

**ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION** A person who wants to donate organs may include their choice in their living will.

**HEALTHCARE REPRESENTATIVE** This document allows you to select the person to make healthcare decisions when you cannot.

**LIVING WILL** This document puts into words your wishes in the event that you become terminally ill and unable to communicate and often includes directions about artificial nutrition, breathing maintenance on a respirator, CPR, and blood transfusions that may be used to prolong life. The opposite of a living will is a **LIFE-PROLONGING PROCEDURE DECLARATION**. This document is used if you want *all* life prolonging medical treatments used to extend your life.

**OUT OF HOSPITAL DO NOT RESUSCITATE DECLARATION** If an emergency occurs outside the hospital, emergency medical professionals will begin life sustaining treatments unless you have this written declaration. The law allows a qualified person to say they do not want CPR given if the heart and lungs stop working in a location that is not the hospital. This document may be cancelled at any time.

**PHYSICIAN ORDERS FOR SCOPE OF TREATMENT (POST)** This form is a direct physician order for either a person with chronic progressive illness, advanced progressive frailty, condition that no recovery can occur without the provision of life prolonging procedures, or that resuscitation would not be successful. This form is signed by your physician (and yourself or your legal rep) and reflects your wishes with regards to CPR, comfort measures, antibiotics, and artificial nutrition. Both you and your physician retain a copy of the document and the form is used when you are admitted to a healthcare facility.

**POWER OF ATTORNEY** A power of attorney, or durable power of attorney, is another kind of advance directive. This document grants another person power over your affairs. The document may cover financial matters, healthcare authority, or both. It must include the name of the person you appoint, list of the situations which you want to give them authority to act, what you want them to be able to do, and what you don't want them to do. This document must be signed by a notary public.

**AN ABSOLUTE MUST!** One of the most important aspects of advance directives is communication. Make sure you discuss your healthcare wishes with your physician AND family. Your doctor can only follow your wishes if they are aware of them. When you discuss your future healthcare expectations, your physician will record them in the medical chart for future reference.

For questions contact us at [lfleetwood@ecommunity.com](mailto:lfleetwood@ecommunity.com) or [llauderdale@ecommunity.com](mailto:llauderdale@ecommunity.com).  
Follow us on  Facebook at [www.facebook.com/faithhealthinitiative](http://www.facebook.com/faithhealthinitiative).

### Hebrews 2:14-15 (NIV)

14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

