A living will is a document that informs doctors and other health care professionals of your choices with regard to artificial life support, feeding tubes, and hydration if you are unable to communicate on your own behalf.

This “Guide to Your Living Will” is intended to help you do the following:

1. Ensure that your living will is legally valid.
2. Answer common questions about the living will.
3. Provide definitions for legal terms you may find in your living will.

Ensuring Your Living Will is Legally Valid

Refer to the “TotalLegal™ Guidelines for Executing Your Living Will Advanced Health Care Directive” that you received with your document for state-specific information on signing your living will.

When does a living will become effective?

Even though the living will is a valid legal document as soon as it is signed, it cannot be used as long as you have the ability to communicate your medical treatment decisions on your own behalf.

Your living will is used only if you are:

1. Unable to understand the nature and consequences of health care decisions, including the benefits and disadvantages of the medical treatments.
2. Unable to reach and communicate an informed decision regarding your treatment.
3. If your physician certifies that you have a terminal condition or are permanently unconscious.

How do I make changes to my living will?

You may make changes to your will for sixty (60) days* after purchase at no additional charge by doing the following:

1. Log in to TotalLegal™ from this page: www.totallegal.com.
2. If more than one document is shown, select the correct document.
3. Select “Update this document.”
4. Make your changes using the edit section tabs.
5. Continue through the rest of the online interview.
6. Select “Download” to save the changes and print your revised document.

* If you wish to make changes beyond 60 days, you may purchase a TotalLegal™ annual subscription.
**Common Terms Related to Your Living Will**

**Advance Health Care Directive:** Also commonly referred to as a “living will,” this document informs doctors and other health care professionals of your wishes concerning artificial life support, feeding tubes, and hydration if you ever become unable to communicate your wishes verbally.

**Anatomical Gift:** The donation of your body or organs to medical science or for transplantation.

**Artificial Hydration and Nutrition:** A form of life-sustaining treatment made up of a chemically balanced mix of nutrients and fluids, provided by placing a tube directly into the stomach, the intestine or a vein.

**Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care:** A power of attorney that remains in effect during the principal’s incapacity that allows your health care agent to make decisions about your medical treatment if you are unable to do so yourself.

**Euthanasia:** The act or practice of killing or permitting the death of a person who is terminally ill or suffering from an incurable condition, usually by the suspension of extraordinary medical treatment or by introducing a lethal chemical, for the purpose of ending suffering.

**Health Care Agent:** A person chosen in advance to make health care decisions for you in the event that you become unable to do so.

**Incapacitated:** The state of being impaired by physical illness or disability to the extent that personal decision-making is impossible.

**Living Will:** See “Advance Health Care Directive.”

**Patient Advocate:** Someone that will be able to enforce your wishes under your living will. (Note: Not all states recognize patient advocates. If patient advocates are recognized in your state, the TotalLegal™ online interview would have contained a patient advocate option.)

**Principal:** The person who is requiring the health care agent/patient advocate to act on his or her behalf.