

how to
use the

care companion

GUIDE FOR PATIENTS AND CARERS

This is a guide for patients and carers who would like to use the *Care Companion* to support them in having honest conversations with their healthcare team and make decisions about their treatment and care.



What is shared decision-making?

Shared decision-making is a process where you and your healthcare professional or team make a health decision together. It involves discussing the available treatment and care options, reviewing the benefits, risks, and unknowns of each option, and taking into consideration your values, preferences and circumstances.

What is the care companion?

The *Care Companion* is a tool called a 'decision aid' that supports shared decision-making. While it may be introduced by your healthcare professional, it can also be introduced by you. It has been designed to help you:

Understand your health condition

Share what matters to you

Explore the benefits, risks and unknowns of treatment options

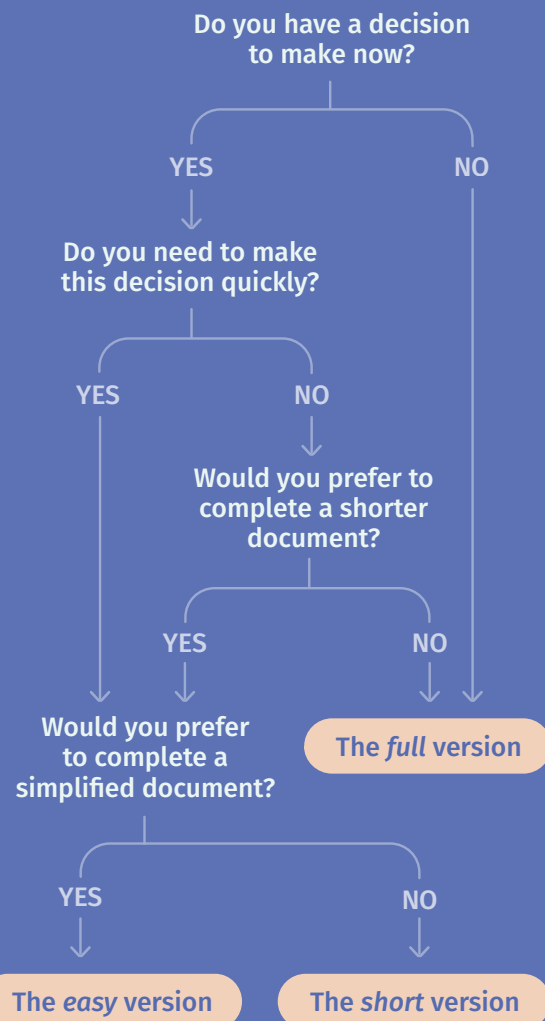
Select the best option based on what is important to you

Why should I use the care companion?

In healthcare, there are many decisions that need to be made around treatment and care. Sometimes, there is not a clear 'best' choice. In these situations, it is especially important that you have the opportunity to fully participate in shared decision-making, so that your treatment and care can be aligned with what matters most to you. The *Care Companion* has been designed to support you in having these honest conversations with your healthcare professional or team.

Which version of the Care Companion should I use?

There are three versions of the *Care Companion*: the full version, short version and easy version. Answer these questions to decide which is right for you.



How do I use the Care Companion?



1 prepare

Tell your healthcare professional that you would like to use the *Care Companion* to guide you in making a decision now or in the future. Usually your doctor or nurse practitioner will be best to lead this discussion. Keep in mind that they may need some time to gather the information needed.

Next, select your preferred version of the *Care Companion* and think about who else you would like to be included to support you. You may also consider completing the first two sections (*Truth Telling* and *Values and Preferences*) before you meet with your healthcare professional.



2 complete

Sit down with your healthcare professional and support people to work through the *Care Companion*. You may choose to complete a printed version, or electronic version using a portable device such as an iPad or tablet. Depending on the decision, several members of your healthcare team may be involved.

To make a decision now
Work through your preferred version of the *Care Companion* with your healthcare professional.

To prepare for a future decision
Work through the first two sections (*Truth Telling* and *Values and Preferences*) in your own time. When it's time to make a decision, complete the remaining sections with your healthcare professional.



3 enact

Keep your *Care Companion* and share it with those of your choosing. This may include carers, family, trusted friends or other members of your healthcare team.

If your condition changes or you have another decision to make
complete a new *Care Companion* or access additional pages or resources by clicking [here](#).