My Health Priorities

A Guide for Older Adults and Care Partners

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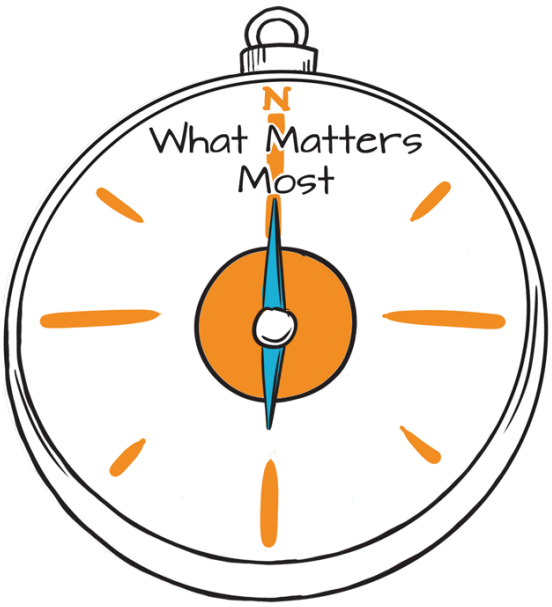

For more information on Patient Priorities Care visit: PatientPrioritiesCare.org

For the online version of this Health Priorities Identification visit: www.MyHealthPriorities.org

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Welcome to My Health Priorities!

What are Health Priorities? Health and life goals and activities you want your health care to help you with given what you are willing and able to do.

Why are Your Health Priorities Important? The more you and your health care team know about what matters most to you, the better you can work together to make health care decisions.

What you will do...

There are **5 steps**. After each step, you will write your answers in a section of your **Health Priorities Summary**.

1. Identify What Matters Most to You - pg. 6

2. Set Your Health Goal - pg. 12

3. Review Your Symptoms & Health Problems - pg. 16

4. Review Your Health Care Tasks & Medications - pg. 19

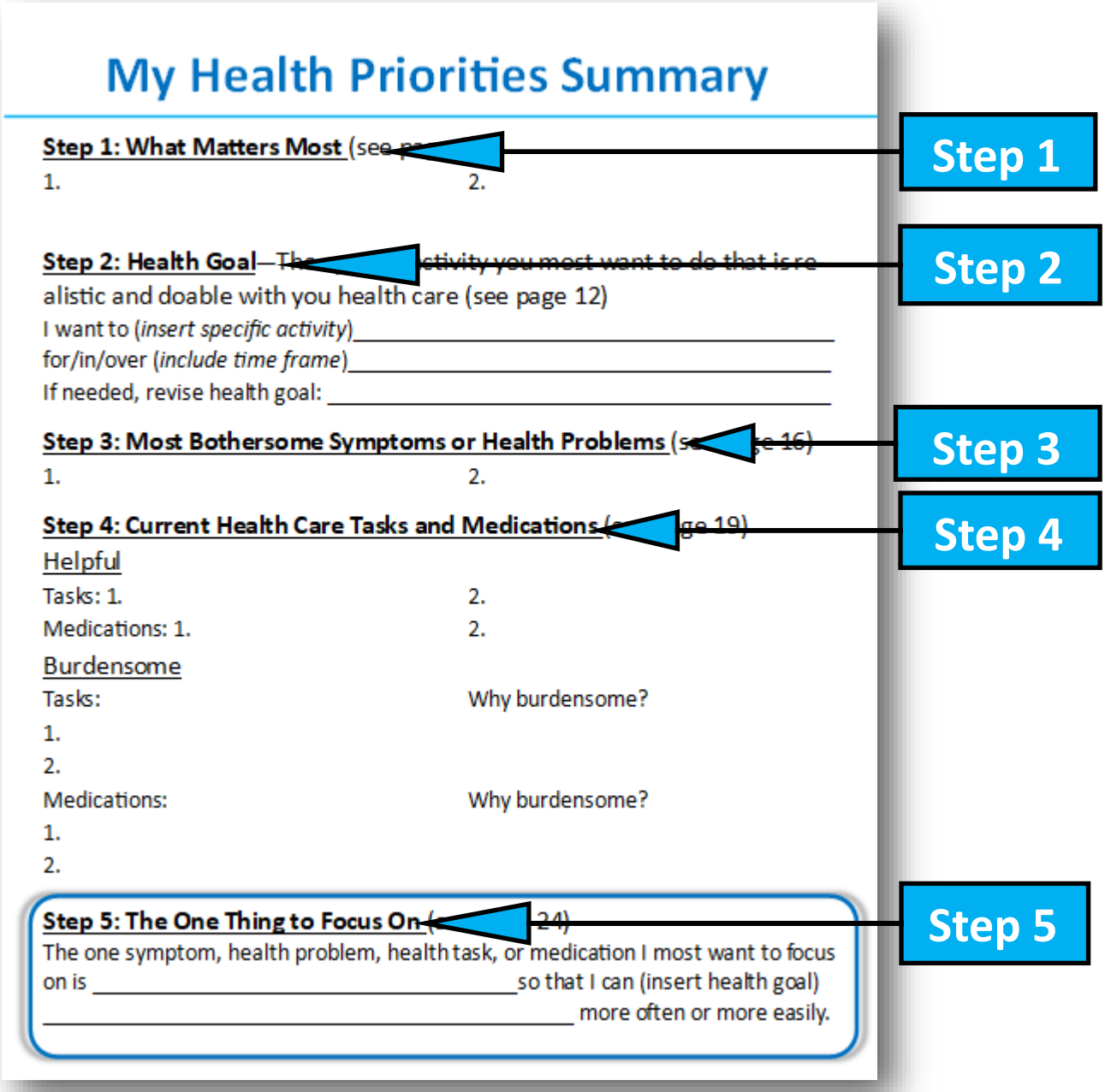
5. Choose the One Thing to Focus On - pg. 24

Tips:

- You can work on this on your own or have a family member or friend help.
- If you change your mind about your answers you can go back and change them.

My Health Priorities Summary

At the end, you'll have a summary to share with your health care team.



My Health Priorities Summary

Step 1: What Matters Most (see page)

1. 2.

Step 2: Health Goal—The ctivity you most want to do that is realistic and doable with you health care (see page 12)

I want to (*insert specific activity*)_____

for/in/over (*include time frame*)_____

If needed, revise health goal: _____

Step 3: Most Bothersome Symptoms or Health Problems (see page 16)

1. 2.

Step 4: Current Health Care Tasks and Medications (see page 19)

Helpful

Tasks: 1. 2.

Medications: 1. 2.

Burdensome

Tasks: Why burdensome?

1.

2.

Medications: Why burdensome?

1.

2.

Step 5: The One Thing to Focus On (see page 24)

The one symptom, health problem, health task, or medication I most want to focus on is _____ so that I can (insert health goal) _____ more often or more easily.

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Step 5

Keep the health priorities summary with you while you work. ***Copies are at the end of the Guide or available on PatientPrioritiesCare.org***

Step 1: Identify What Matters Most to You

First, you will explore what matters most to you in your life and health that you want your health care team to help you with

Connecting

Enjoying Life

Managing Health

Functioning

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Descriptions and examples from the important life areas:

What gives your life meaning, purpose, joy, or satisfaction in these four important areas?

Connecting:

Family and Friends: Doing activities together
Community: Giving and receiving support
Spirituality: Doing activities that support spiritual life

Enjoying Life:

Productivity: Contributing, volunteering
Personal Growth/Learning: Developing as a person
Recreation: Doing enjoyable activities

Functioning:

Independence: Taking care of self and/or home

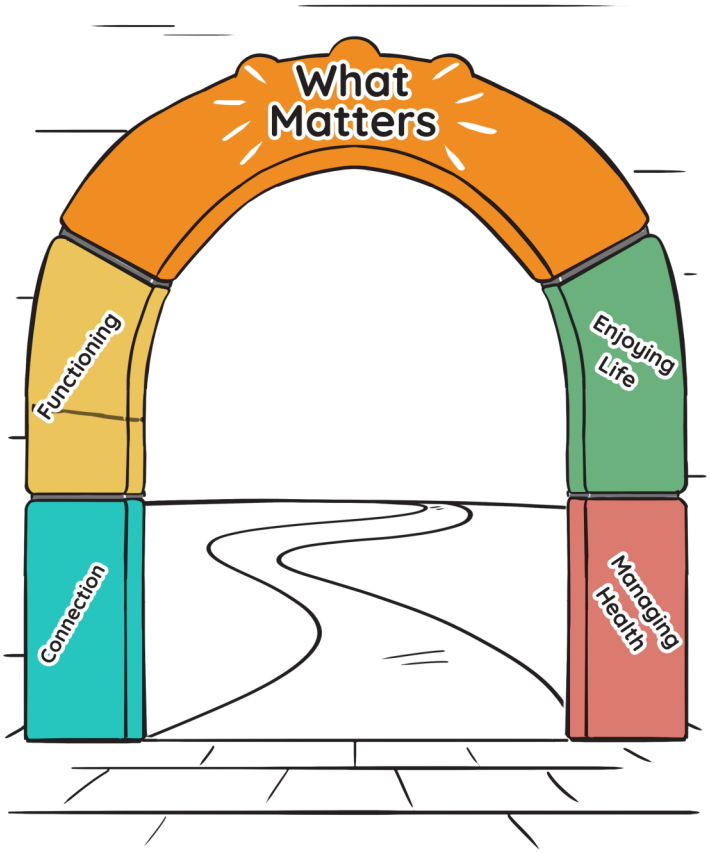
Managing Health:

Quality of Life: Balancing symptoms, comfort, and function with living as long as possible

Identifying What Matters Most

As you decide what matters most to you, consider:

- What would you **be doing** if you were having a good day?
- **Who or what** matters most in your daily life?
- What **activities** would you like to spend more time doing?



- What would you most like your health care team to **support** you with?

Meet Dave...

To help guide you, you'll see an example of how **Dave** identifies his health priorities.

Dave's a 74 year old man with diabetes, heart disease and arthritis. He takes care of his wife who needs a lot of help.

Note: There is a full Health Priorities Summary for Dave available at the end of the guide on Pg. 31

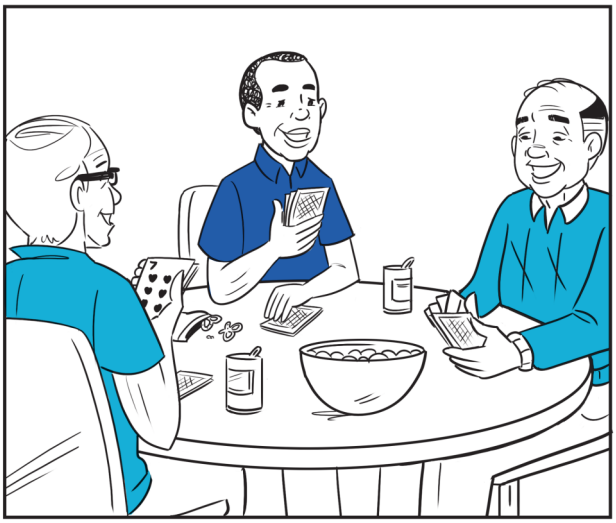
What Matters Most to Dave

Let's see what Dave chose for What Matters Most...

Step 1: What Matters Most (see page 6)

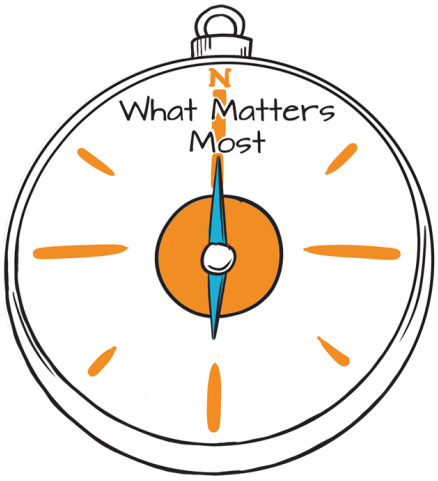
1. Doing activities with family and friends
2. Taking care of family, friends and pets in my life

After writing down **2 things** that matter to him, **Dave** circled "*Doing activities with family and friends*" as the thing that matters most to him right now.



Now it's your turn...

It's important to have your **Health Priorities Summary** in front of you. Remember, they are available at the end of the guide or at patientprioritiescare.org



Identify up to 2 things that feel important right now. Write these on your **Health Priorities Summary**, under "**Step 1. What Matters Most**".

Then, pick one item that you most want to focus on right now. It's not the only thing that is important, but gives your clinicians a place to start. Circle this on your **Health Priorities Summary.**

You are done with **Step 1**! Move on to **Step 2**...

Step 2: Set Your Health Goal

In **Step 1**, you identified what matters most to you right now.

In **Step 2**, think about what activities you want to do that reflect what matters most.

*Your **Health Goal** is one activity that reflects what matters most (see **Step 1**) that you think your healthcare can help you achieve. You can update your goal over time.*

Your health goal needs to be *Specific* and *Realistic*

Specific:

Includes exactly what you will do. Be as detailed as possible. **Ask yourself:**

- Which activity do I most want to focus on?
- How do I want to do that one activity? Where, with whom and how often/long?

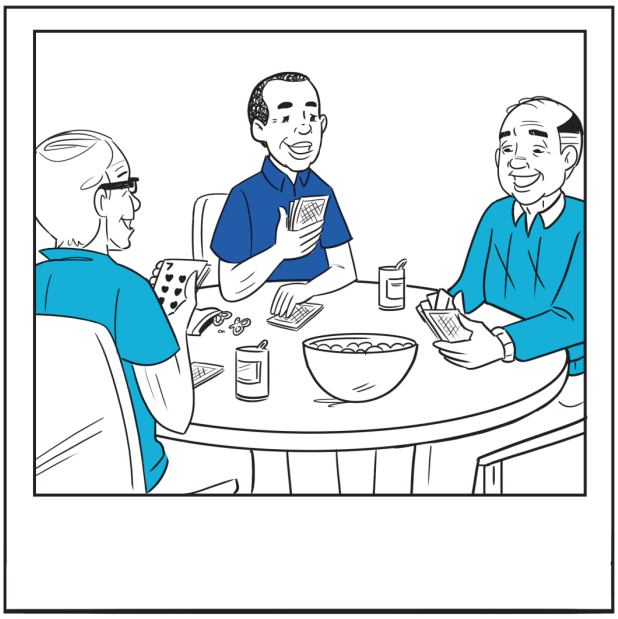
Realistic:

Something you are able to do based on your current health and life, or could do soon with help from your health care. **Ask yourself:**

- What activity that reflects what matters most to me is likely to happen?
- When's the last time I did this? If it's been a long time, am I being realistic?
- If what I want to do isn't possible right now, is there a similar but easier activity I could do instead?

Dave's Health Goal

In **Step 1**, Dave decided **doing activities with family and friends** mattered most to him right now. Then, Dave made a health goal to **go out to eat with his friends once a week.**



However he realized it <u>wasn't</u> ***Realistic*** since he's always tired and he feels bad leaving his wife alone.

Instead, Dave found a more doable goal that allows him to see his friends, which is what matters most to him.

Dave's health goal became: **"I want to have my friends over once a week for lunch and poker."**

Now it's your turn...

Look at your **Health Priorities Summary** to review what you chose in **Step 1**. Your **health goal** is the ***specific*** activity you most want to keep doing, or do soon, that is ***realistic*** and reflects what you chose as what matters most.

On your **Health Priorities Summary**, write a realistic and specific **Health Goal**. If you are not sure it is specific or realistic, refer back to page 13 and revise your goal if need.

Step 2: Health Goal—The specific activity you most want to do that is realistic and doable with your health care (see page 12)

I want to (*insert specific activity*)_____

for/in/over (*include time frame*)_____

If needed, revise health goal: _____

You are done with **Step 2**! Move on to **Step 3**...

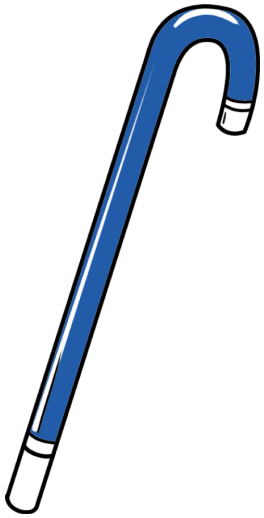
Step 3: Review Your Health Symptoms and Problems

Now that we know your health goal, it is important to know about the symptoms or health problems that are most bothersome or most interfering with that goal.

Bothersome symptoms include (but aren't limited to):

- *Poor eyesight*
- *Poor hearing*
- *Incontinence*
- *Going to bathroom often*
- *Diarrhea*
- *Constipation*
- *Trouble sleeping*
- *Upset stomach*
- *Pain*

- *Feeling sad or anxious*
- *Weakness*
- *Unsteady*
- *Dizziness*
- *Low energy*
- *Tired*
- *Muscle weakness*



Dave's most bothersome symp-

As Dave thought about his health goal to have his friends over for lunch and poker, he realized what interfered most was:

1) urinary incontinence and

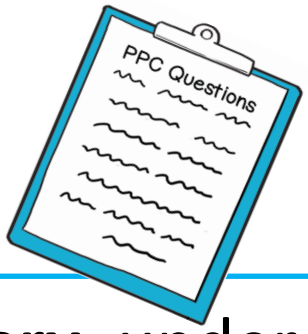
2) low energy

Of all his **bothersome symptoms**, these are the ones he wants to focus on with his health care team. He wrote these down on the **Health Priorities Summary**.

Step 3: Most Bothersome Symptoms or Health Problems (see page 16)

1. urinary incontinence 2. low energy

Now it's your turn...



On your **Health Priorities Summary**, under "**Most Bothersome Symptoms or Health Problems**," write up to **two** that are keeping you from being able to do your health goal.

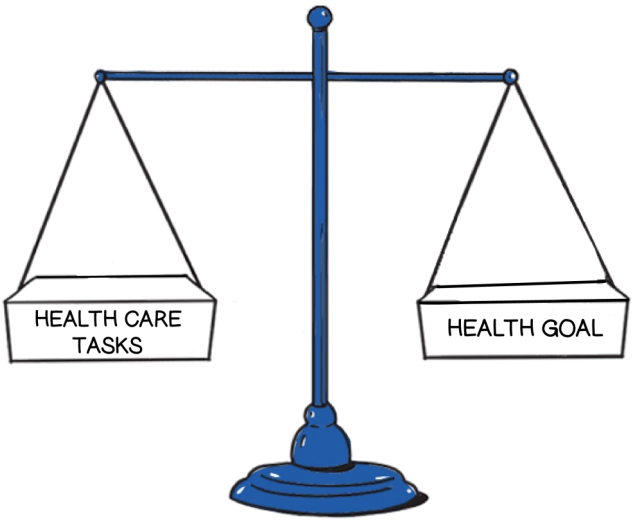
These are things you'd like to discuss with your health care team.

Tips:

- See page 16 for some examples of symptoms or health problems that may be bothersome to you
- If it's hard to choose only two, look back at the health goal you created in **Step 2**.
- If it's hard to identify a symptom or health problem, look back at **Step 2**—what keeps you from doing that activity?

You are done with **Step 3**! Move on to **Step 4**...

Step 4: Review Your Health Care Tasks and Medications



Sometimes you have to make difficult choices about which tasks and medications are worth the discomfort or burden.

Knowing which health care tasks and medications are "**Helpful**" and which are "**Burdensome**" OR "**Not Helpful**" will help you and your health care team find a balance between:

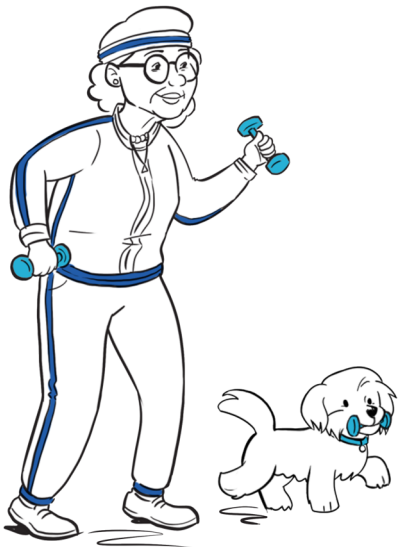
- *the health goal you desire and*
- *the health care tasks you are willing and able to do to achieve your goal*

Your Helpful and Burdensome
Health Care Tasks and Medications

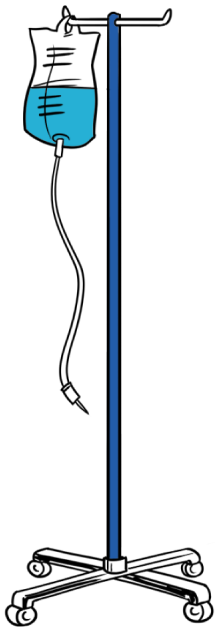
Your health care tasks are: Self-care or at-home health care tasks; Tests, treatments, and procedures; Health care visits; Community programs and supports.

These include (but aren't limited to)...

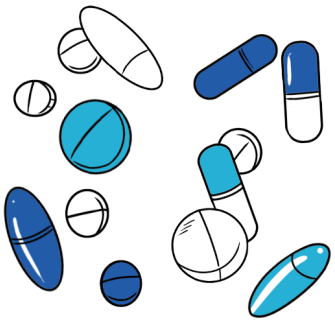
- *Special diet*
- *Checking health signs*
- *Checking blood sugar*
- *Exercising*
- *Wearing a CPAP mask*
- *Wearing oxygen*
- *Mobility assistance*



- *Blood tests*
- *Dialysis*
- *Chemotherapy/ Radiation*
- *X-rays*
- *Surgeries*
- *Diagnostic tests*
- *Counseling*
- *Specialist visits*
- *Primary Care visits*
- *Physical Therapy*
- *In-home help*



Your Helpful and Burdensome
Health Care Tasks and Medications



You may take medicines by mouth, inhale them, or inject them with a needle.

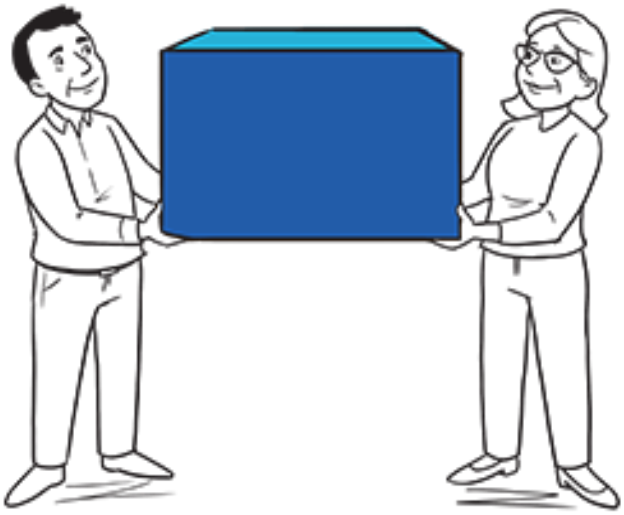
You don't need to write down the name on the bottle. You can just describe what you take it for.

Consider :

- What do you like best/what is working well about how your conditions are managed?
- Which of your tasks/medications are taking the most of your time? Does it feel worth it?
- Are there tasks you do or medications that you take for your health that you would like to stop doing or do less of?
- If you could change one thing about your health care, what would it be?

Dave's Helpful and Burdensome Health Care Tasks and Medications

Helpful: Some **Health care tasks and medications**, (exercising and using his arthritis cream) helps **Dave** achieve his goal and he is able to do them easily.



Burdensome: Following a special diet was difficult because he couldn't eat what he likes. Taking his water pill feels difficult and time consuming because he has to go to the bathroom too often.

Dave wrote these tasks and medications on his **Health Priorities Summary.**

Now it's your turn...

We want to know which tasks and medications you find particularly helpful or burdensome. On your **Health Priorities Summary,** under "Current Health Care Tasks and Medications," write down up to 2 tasks and medications that are helpful and up to 2 that are burdensome. Note what makes something burdensome/unhelpful.

Step 4: Current Health Care Tasks and Medications (see page 19)

Helpful

Tasks: 1.	2.
Medications: 1.	2.

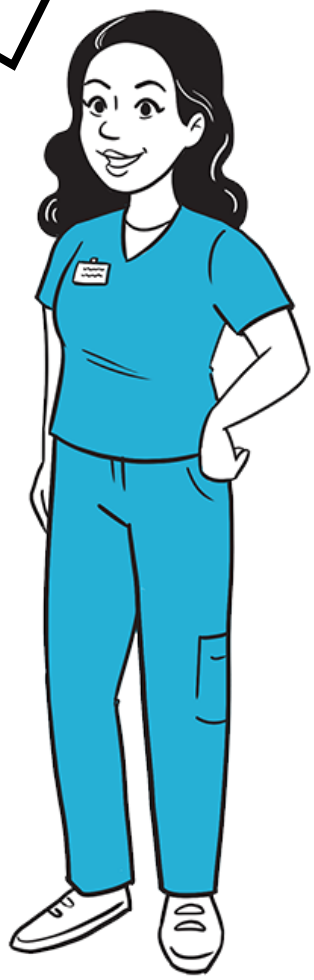
Burdensome

Tasks:	Why burdensome?
1.	
2.	
Medications:	Why burdensome?
1.	
2.	

You're done with **Step 4**! Move on to **Step 5**...

Step 5: Chose The One Thing to Focus On

Our last step is to put your important health information together into **The One Thing**—the health problem you most want your health care team to focus on because it is interfering with your health goal.



Focusing on **The One Thing** doesn't mean your health care team won't address other problems you've identified, it's just a way to get started to make sure they know what matters most to you.

Dave's One Thing

Let's see how Dave selected The One Thing.

He reviewed his **Health Priorities Summary**, and chose "*low energy*" as **The One Thing** because it interferes most with his health goal.

On his Summary he wrote:

The one symptom, health problem, health task, or medication I most want to focus on is *having low energy* so that I can (insert health goal) *have my friends over once a week for lunch and poker* more often or more easily.

Now it's your turn...

Review your **Health Priorities Summary** and select **The One Thing** that is most bothersome or interferes most with your health goal.

On your **Health Priorities Summary,** look over your "**Most Bothersome Symptoms or Health Problems**" and "**Burdensome Health Care Tasks and Medications**." From these, choose **The One Thing** that you want to work on first with your health care team first.

Write this on your **Health Priorities Summary** under "**The One Thing to Focus On**", along with your **Health Goal** (from **Step 2**).

You have completed your Health Priorities Summary!

If your priorities and/or life circumstances change, remember you can come back and update your health priorities! Bring your Health Priorities Summary to your next appointment. Show and talk with your health care team about it. Your health care team wants to know what is important to you. It makes caring for you easier.

See the next section for tips on how to discuss your health priorities with your health care team.

Tips: Talking with Your Health Care Team

Ask for help to meet your health goal.
For example, "Is there something that will help me walk around my house without being so short of breath?"

Ask if treatments will help your health goal.
For example, "Would this treatment improve my shortness of breath enough to get to lunch with my friends every day?"

Ask what the expected treatment effort would be.
For example, "What exactly will I have to do on my own if we start insulin?"

Be specific.
For example, instead of saying "I don't like this medicine," say "This medicine makes me feel weak and dizzy so I can't get out to visit friends or see my family."

Tips: Suggested Words to Use

"The One Thing I want to focus on is_____. What do you think will help with that?"

"I really don't like...because..."

"What concerns me most is..."

"My main health goal is making sure I can… what can we do to help me with that?"

"I'm willing to_____ if it helps me meet my goals."

Thank You!

We hope that knowing your health priorities will help you to communicate what matters most to you to your health care team, family and care partners.

Dave's Health Priorities Summary

Step 1: What Matters Most (see page 6)

1. Doing activities with family and friends 2. Taking care of family, friends and pets in my life

Step 2: Health Goal—The specific activity you most want to do that is realistic and doable with your health care (see page 12)

I want to (*insert specific activity*) _Have my friends over for lunch and poker___

for/in/over (*include time frame*) _____once a week_____

If needed, revise health goal: _____

Step 3: Most Bothersome Symptoms or Health Problems (see page 16)

1. Urinary incontinence
2. low energy

Step 4: Current Health Care Tasks and Medications (see page 19)

Helpful

Tasks: 1. exercising 2.

Medications: 1. arthritis cream 2.

Burdensome

Tasks:	Why burdensome?
1. following special diet	can't eat what I like
2.	
Medications:	**Why burdensome?**
1. water pill	have to go to the bathroom too often
2.	

Step 5: The One Thing to Focus On (see page 24)

The one symptom, health problem, health task, or medication I most want to focus on is __having low energy_____ so that I can (insert health goal) have my friends over once a week for lunch and poker more often or more easily.

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1. 2.

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