

The Sh*t List

A resource to help with difficult decisions and the hard conversations



Planning for your death is one of the most selfless things you can do. It means your loved ones can mourn you without scrambling to guess your passwords or trying to come up with the places you might have a bank account. And most importantly, it means they will know what you would most want in your absence.

It is also one of the most – if not *the* most – difficult things you will ever do.

We have created **The Sh*t List** as guide or checklist that will help you to navigate your death and what you want. It is meant to be both a practical tool and a conversation starter. Every experience is unique, so not every point here may be relevant to you. Take what makes sense for your life, leave the rest, and add your own pieces along the way.



It is unlikely you will complete this list in one sitting, and it may be something you'll revisit and update over time.

Here are some tips on how to make this exercise a bit easier to digest:

- Print a hard copy and place it in a drawer so you can choose when to pull it out and when to leave it alone. If you're someone who prefers to work digitally, save this as a working document on Google Drive.
- Work on it with one or two people who can be open to these difficult discussions and will support you in making the best choices for you. Bringing them on to help early can help lighten the load.
- Don't forget to let someone know where you've stored this should the day come when you are not able to pull it out.

Ready to begin?

Go to a section that feels most manageable today.

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Practical Information

01



Practical Information

Planning for the future means ensuring that you and your loved ones have access to clear and actionable information when it's needed. These details will help guide your support circle through important decisions and provide reassurance during challenging moments. Here are some key areas to consider while you prepare:

- Healthcare team contact information – Who does your support circle need to call if you need help, and in what scenarios? (palliative care, family doctor, oncologist, etc.)
- Do Not Resuscitate Order (DNR) – In the case of an emergency, do you want extreme measures taken to keep you alive? Speak to your doctor about what this would look like or mean for you.
- Power of Attorney for Personal Care – A legal document in which one person gives another person the authority to make personal care decisions on their behalf if they become mentally incapable. Who do you trust to make the right decisions for you?
- Do you want to donate your organs? Have you registered to be a donor?
- Do you hold the information or documents for your children? Things like passports, birth certificates, vaccination records, medication lists, contacts for teachers, etc.
- If applicable, where does your family apply for a pension or life insurance?



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Accounts and Services

02



Accounts and Services

Believe it or not, the average Canadian has eight recurring subscription services – on top of bank accounts, mortgage payments, insurance, phone bills and more. If left unmanaged, these accounts and services can stay active after the account holder passes, sometimes renewing automatically for months or even years. Preparing a list with all the key details (think emails, passwords, account numbers, PINS etc.) makes it easier for your loved ones to close or transfer accounts and services as needed. Here's some suggestions to get you started:

- Banking information
- Pre-authorized payments
- Credit card information
- Bills – utilities, internet, mortgage, rent, etc.
- Investment accounts
- Digital wallets
- Parking spaces
- Phone or computer passwords
- Social media accounts and passwords
- Email accounts and password
- Travel reservations
- Subscriptions – apps, magazines, online streaming services, food delivery
- iTunes, Google Play, Spotify, Audible, etc.
- Insurance – home/renters, car, health
- Gym memberships
- Professional licenses



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End of Life Care

03



End of Life Care

When living with metastatic breast cancer (MBC), it can feel like there are many parts of the experience that are outside of your control. However, you can shape your end-of-life care. Taking time to explore your wishes and creating a plan helps ensure your intentions are respected when the time comes. Documenting and communicating that plan early on can ease the burden, allowing you to focus on what matters most rather than navigating difficult decisions in a more vulnerable moment. Here are some things to consider:

- What is your living will?
- Where would you prefer to die? At home or in hospice?
- Have you planned for Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID)?
- Who do you want to be present in your final days?



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Commemoration Planning

04



Commemoration Planning

Outlining how you'd like to commemorate your life and say goodbye can bring peace of mind. Communicating what is most important to you in advance can help those around you navigate this time with clarity and respect for your choices. Here are somethings to consider:

- Do you want a burial or cremation? Or maybe something unique (yes, you can be made into a diamond and shine on after you're gone)?
- Where do you want to be laid to rest? What company can help your loved one make these arrangements?
- If you are being cremated, where are your ashes going?
- Would you like a monument or plaque? If so, where?
- Do you want to do a funeral? A wake? A celebration of life? And where will it take place?
- When? Do you want something right away or do you want to wait?
- Do you have specific people you would like to speak?
- Who is presiding over the event?
- What songs/music should be played?
- Do you have a specific feeling you want the space to evoke? Is this a space for mourning? Celebration? Joy? All of the above?
- Are there any readings or passages? Do you have someone in mind?
- Will there be a slide show? What photos are being used and who is creating it?
- Do you want a shiva/visitation/viewing? Are any of these part of your religious practices?
- Is there anything or anyone you absolutely do not want included?



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Communications and Digital Presence

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Communications and Digital Presence

Throughout your life, you've built important relationships – with family, friends, coworkers, people in the breast cancer community. How do you want the news of your passing to be shared with them? How would you like to be remembered online? Giving this some thought in advance will be helpful to document, including:

- How will people be notified about your death? This may look different for different groups of people.
- Do you want your social media accounts to remain open? If so, who will administer them? Can they continue posting on your account when you're gone? Consider adding a legacy contact to your social media accounts.
- Can people still comment on your posts?
- Will there be an update about your death on social media? If so, what will it say? Does the person posting it on your behalf have access to the account?
- Will there be an email update? Who has this list of emails?



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Legacy

06



Legacy

Your legacy isn't just about leaving something behind, it's honoring your values, relationships and stories in a way that reflects who you are. Thoughtful planning gives you the opportunity to say what needs to be said, be at peace with what remains unresolved and ensure the essence of who you are continues. It's also one of the final ways you can advocate for yourself and the ones you love, so consider:

- Do you have a will? Where is it located? Who is the executor?
- Is there a list of personal items you would like distributed to friends or family?
- Do you want donations made in your honour to a specific charity? Or a GoFundMe?
- Do you want to create videos, cards, photo albums or letters for anyone?
- What things do you want to "finish" – projects, etc.?



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Bereavement Support

07



Bereavement Support

It's natural to want to continue offering love and support to the people you care about, even when you're no longer around. While you can't protect people from grief, having a few simple ways to help your loved ones process your passing can help relieve some of the pressure you may be feeling. Here are a few ideas:

- Gather a list of support services for family/children/spouse.
- A reading list of good books on grief.
- Leave behind a playlist of songs that mean something to you that they can play when they're especially missing you
- Suggest an ongoing celebration for friends and family every year. When? Where?



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Important Contacts and Accounts

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Important Contacts and Accounts 1/4

- Care team:
- Social Insurance Number:
- Attorney:
- Location of my will and/or family trust:
- Power of Attorney:
- Location of my living will/advanced directive:



Important Contacts and Accounts 2/4

- In lieu of flowers, I would like donations made:
- Stocks/investment accounts:
- Bank accounts:
- Other financial accounts:
- Credit cards:
- Mortgage/rent information:



Important Contacts and Accounts 3/4

- Club memberships:
- Insurance (home/health/care/etc.):
- Cars/location of titles:
- Safety deposit boxes/safe codes:
- Phone and computer codes:
- Emails and passwords:



Important Contacts and Accounts 4/4

- Other contacts and accounts that would be helpful for loved ones to know of:



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