

THE 4Ms

The 4Ms Framework is a great way to think about and talk about discuss your care or a loved one's healthcare. It helps you make sure you have all of your bases covered. Learn about them and turn the page to write down your thoughts. how the 4Ms can help you. Visit www.DementiaRosary.com/books for books, as well as free downloads, articles, videos, podcasts, and prayer requests. Sign up for the email newsletter to receive updated handouts like this one.

WHAT MATTERS

As you may expect, your doctor and other health-care providers need to know what matters, or makes life meaningful for you. This will guide how they speak with you about your health and health-care decisions, no matter your health status or condition. For example, are you an active grandparent who cares for and plays with grandchildren? Are you also active in Parish ministry and attend Mass daily? Do you enjoy traveling abroad? Are you a caregiver? Letting your doctor know helps them understand your life context and priorities, as well as builds a relationship of trust. When your health limits your activities, as all of us will eventually experience, this relationship is a foundation for making adaptations to keep doing what is meaningful for you (and not give up what is meaningful). Make sure your doctor knows that you are Catholic, and that guides your end-of-life healthcare. Everyone 18 and older should assign a healthcare proxy (usually a spouse or other family member) to speak for them if they are not able to make specific decisions for themselves at that moment.

MEDICATIONS

Generally speaking, our list of prescription medications grows longer as we get older. Your doctor should review medications at every annual visit and when there's any significant change in your health. Let them know immediately when you feel unwell, when it can be due to medication side effects - don't wait! It's important to always let your doctor know what supplements, vitamins, and even over-the-counter medications you are taking, because they might cause side effects with your prescription medications. It's important to know what each medication is for and to take it as prescribed. Certain types of medications should not be used at all or used with caution after age 65, since the body may process them differently than before. Even primary care physicians and specialists can inadvertently prescribe inappropriate medications to older adults, and it is prudent to double-check with a pharmacist and/or trusted online medication calculators associated with researchers.

MENTATION

Mentation includes cognition, or how you think and remember, and mood, which can include depression and anxiety. Your primary care doctor should ask about or perform a brief screening of your cognition each year, and if there's any significant health change for you. If they do find something concerning, they can order lab work to rule out other causes and refer you to neurology for more cognitive testing. They should also quickly screen you for depression. Discovering these health concerns as soon as possible can help you to keep living the meaningful life that matters to you. You probably agree it would be better to find an issue before it gets worse, and to work on solutions and adaptations.

MOBILITY

Mobility is about getting around in your home and out in the community. Most of us want to maintain our mobility and independence for as long as possible. Your primary care doctor may want to see how quickly and safely you're able to get up from a seated position and might even want to watch you walk down the hall of the clinic to assess your movement. Just as with mentation, discovering a mobility concern early can help you address it and keep you moving. It's also important to keep your body strong and moving with appropriate exercises. By exercising and adapting our environments to be safe, we can potentially avoid falls and keep doing what matters to us longer.

My 4Ms

As Catholics, we know that we are stewards of our body, mind, and soul rather than owning these. We hope that you will appreciate and take care of these gifts with the grace of God, and with God's gift of medical treatments. Good communication with your medical team and your family is key, and starts with the 4 Ms. Turn the side over to take some notes on your forearm and consider sharing it with your medical team and family members.

FIRST NAME OR INITIALS _____

WHAT MATTERS

What makes life meaningful for you? What activities do you like doing? Who do you enjoy spending time with?

MEDICATIONS

Do you take all of your prescribed medications? Do you know what each of them do for you?

MENTATION

How sharp do you think your thinking and memory are compared to a year ago? Do you have any concerns or stress?

MOBILITY

How are you getting around compared to a year ago? Have you fallen in the last year? Do you have a fear of falling?

This 4Ms handout should not be considered personal medical or other professional advice. You are special, and your health is unique to you. We hope that you will pray about what matters and think about the information on this handout so that you can discuss it with your healthcare professional and family.