



# LIFE INSURANCE

AWARENESS MONTH  
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## Answering the Dreaded Question: 5 Things You Need to Do

“If I died tomorrow, how would my loved ones fare financially?” It’s the dreaded question that no one likes to think about, but not doing so can have serious consequences. A death in the family causes enough emotional stress – make sure financial difficulties don’t get added to the mix. Take steps now so that if the worst were to happen, your family knows and understands how to execute your wishes and has the financial support it needs to carry on.

The nonprofit Life and Health Insurance Foundation for Education (LIFE) offers the following five simple steps to help people get their financial affairs in order so that they can rest easy knowing their families would be taken care of when they die:

1. **Make it a Family Affair.** Be direct when talking with loved ones about this difficult topic. Keep the conversation private, in a setting where everyone feels comfortable and involve as many immediate family members as you can. Then talk through worst-case scenarios to find out what everyone’s concerns are and needs would be, financial and otherwise. This could include identifying who would take care of your children if you and your spouse died or evaluating how much money your family would need upon your death to meet ongoing living expenses and fund future plans. Answering these questions will help ensure that your family is well taken care of no matter what twists and turns life brings.
2. **Pay it Forward** – Purchase adequate life insurance for you and your spouse now to help your family avoid financial pitfalls later. Having the right amount of coverage will help ensure that your family’s dreams can be realized even if you’re not there to witness them. How much and what kind of life insurance to buy is based on a number of factors (see *It Takes Two... Ask Yourself: How Much? and What Kind?*), so seek assistance from a qualified insurance professional.
3. **Where There’s A “Will” There’s A Way.** Make a will and update it periodically. Make sure it specifies executors, trustees and guardians for dependent children. Don’t forget to get a living will too (health care directive) to make sure loved ones know whether or not you want to be kept on artificial life support. Similarly, you should designate a power of attorney – someone authorized to manage your affairs, typically financial ones, if you’re not able to handle them yourself.
4. **Rest in Peace** – Decide on your preferences for final arrangements including your funeral, type of burial, where you would like to be buried and whether you want to be an organ donor. Write wishes down and make them known to family and close friends.
5. **Make a list and check it twice** – Create a list all key financial information, such as bank account numbers, mortgage and insurance policies. In addition, write down where important non-financial information and valuables are located, including birth and marriage certificates, titles and deeds and safe deposit box keys. Don’t forget to include contact information for all of the professionals who help with your financial and legal affairs, such as your insurance advisor, attorney or accountant. Lastly, keep copies of the list in a safe place and make sure family members know how to get to it.

For more information on end-of-life planning, talk to a qualified insurance professional (see *Looking for Mr. Right: 6 Tips for Finding a Good Life Insurance Agent*) or log-on to [www.life-line.org](http://www.life-line.org).