



Decision making during a hospital stay

Your hospital guide 3

Your hospital guides were produced by the Ready to Go Home project, funded by Department of Social Services.



About this information



This easy-to-read information is about making decisions to do with your treatment and health care.

When you are in hospital, it is important that you are as involved as you can be in making these decisions.



The information will help you to:

Be prepared

In case there are situations where you may not be able to make your own decisions

Be confident

When you are asking questions, and

When you are giving your **consent**
This is when you agree to have a treatment.



Be comfortable

About telling people your worries about your health and health care.



Be prepared



There might be times in hospital when you can't make your own decisions about your health care.

This might be in an emergency such as an accident.



Or it could be while you are having an operation.



If this happens, someone else might have to make decisions for you.

It's a good idea to think about this and make some decisions before you have to go into hospital.



If you already have your decisions written down, other people will know what you want to happen.

There are different ways to do this.

Decision-making documents



There are 3 kinds of documents that can help you be ready in case you can't make your own decisions.

They are **legal** documents. This means that the law says people have to do what the documents say.

The documents cover different ways of making decisions.



So, it's important to use the right one.

Or you can choose to have a person who will make decisions for you.

Advance Health Directive

This is a legal form you fill in to tell doctors what treatments you want or don't want if you become very ill.

You can say what your choices are for different kinds of medical treatments, operations and dental care.

You can say what treatments you would want or don't want if you are going to die.



Enduring Power of Guardianship

This is a document to say which person has legal power to make decisions for someone who can't make their own. They can make decisions about your health care.



The person is called an **enduring guardian**. This is because they always have this power, not just if you are very sick.

Enduring Power of Attorney

This is a document to say which person you choose to make decisions for you when you can't make your own decisions.

They can make decisions about your money and things you own.

But they don't have power to make decisions about your health care.



The Office of the Public Advocate has more information about these decision-making documents.

Website:

www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au or
phone 1300 858 455

Decision makers



If you have an Advance Health Directive saying what treatment you want or don't want, the hospital will follow it.

If you don't have one, or it doesn't include what is happening to you, the hospital will ask someone to make a decision for you.



The hospital will use a **hierarchy of decision makers**.

This is a list of people who could make a decision for you.

It is in order, saying which people the hospital would ask first.

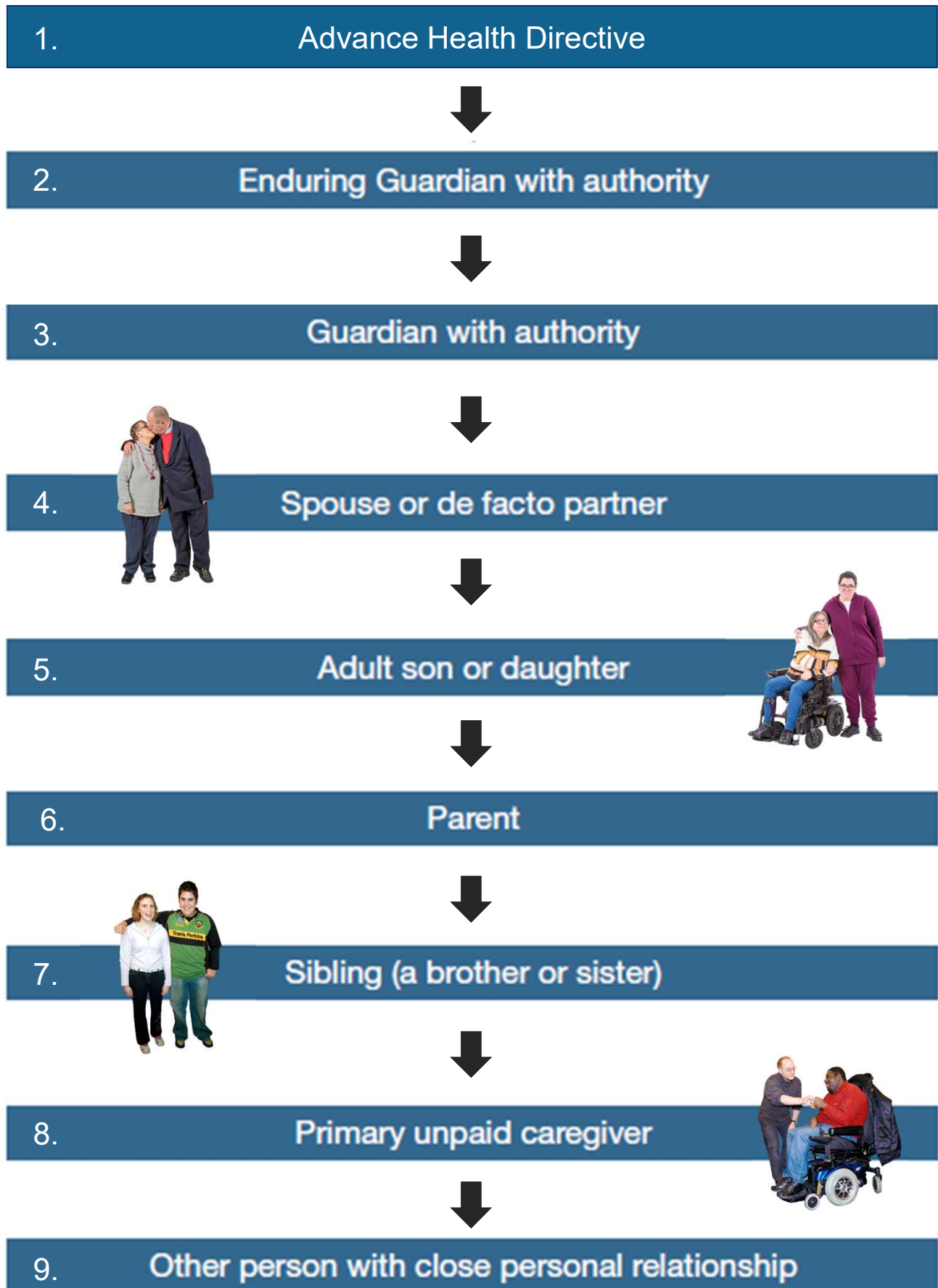
There is a picture of the hierarchy on the next page.



Your health team can give you urgent treatment to save your life or to stop your pain.

They don't have to ask other decision makers, such as your family or guardian.

Hierarchy of decision makers



Changing your decision-making documents



**Advance Care
Planning Australia**
BE OPEN | BE READY | BE HEARD

To change your Advance Health Directive you need to make a new one.

Call the Advance Care Planning phone support line on (08) 9222 2300, for more information.



Call the Office of the Public Advocate for information about changing an:

- Enduring Power of Guardianship, or
- Enduring Power of Attorney.

Phone: 1300 858 455

Be confident



Information about your decision-making

When you are in hospital you need to feel confident your health team knows about decision-making for you.

Your health team look after lots of people, so they probably won't remember what is in your file.

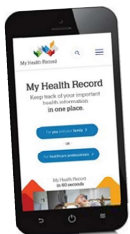


Here are some ways you can be sure they know about your decision-making.

Hang photos of your decision makers next to your bed.



Keep a copy of your Advance Health Directive on your bedside table.



Make sure your Advance Health Directive is in your My Health Record.



Use a MedicAlert bracelet so your health team can use MedicAlert to see your information.

Asking questions



When you are in hospital, you should ask questions about your treatment, tests or procedures, to help with making decisions.

But you might not be sure what questions to ask your health team.

Here are 5 great questions to ask:



1. Do I really need this test, treatment or procedure?
2. What are the risks?
3. Are there simpler, safer options?
4. What happens if I do not do anything?
5. What are the costs?



Choosing Wisely Australia came up with these questions. You can find out more on the Choosing Wisely Australia website:

www.choosingwisely.org.au

Giving informed consent



When you are in hospital, you will be asked if you agree to have tests, procedures, treatments and other things you might need.

Informed consent is when you have **legal capacity** to agree, or not agree, and no-one is forcing you to make a decision.



People with an Enduring Guardian don't have legal capacity to agree or not on certain kinds of decisions.

You can find out about legal capacity on the Legal Aid website: www.legalaid.wa.gov.au or call them on 1300 650 579



Before you decide to give your consent, ask the 5 Choosing Wisely questions so that:

- You have all the information you need to make a decision
- You understand any choices about your treatment.
- You understand what is good about the treatment.



You understand the **risks** or things that could go wrong.

Be comfortable



When you are in hospital, you need to feel comfortable that it is okay to say if you are worried or unhappy about your health or health care.



You have health care rights.

- You should be treated with respect.
- Health care staff should listen to you and help you.
- You should be safe.





Are you worried that you are getting sicker? And

Do you feel like no-one is listening to you?

In WA public hospitals, you can use **Aishwarya's CARE call**. It is 3 steps to follow to get help in hospital:



Step 1. If you feel you, or the person you care for, is getting sicker, tell a nurse or other staff member.



Step 2. If you are still worried, tell a senior nurse or staff member.

Step 3. You can call the Aishwarya CARE Call line. Ask your nurse for the phone number.



For more information on Aishwarya's CARE Call go to the Healthy WA website:

www.healthywa.gov.au

Advocates



If you have worries about your health care, you can ask an advocate to help you.

An advocate is a person who can help you with a problem.



They could be a family member, friend or professional advocate.



They will speak up for your rights and what is best for you.

They can help you to speak out.

They could support you at meetings with health staff.



The Ask Izzy website can help you to find a professional advocate in your area. www.askizzy.org.au