

# Decision making during a hospital stay



When you are in hospital, it is important that you are involved in your treatment and health care decisions as much as you can be.

## During a hospital stay:



### Be prepared

...for circumstances where you may not be able to make your own decisions



### Be confident

...asking questions and providing informed consent



### Be comfortable

...raising concerns about your health and health care



## Be Prepared

Being prepared before going into hospital ensures your health choices and treatment preferences are respected.

In some circumstances, you may not be able to make your own decisions when you need to. For example: in an emergency such as an accident or during an operation. In these cases, someone else may need to make decisions on your behalf or follow instructions you have prepared.

### Three important decision-making documents to consider

There are three legal documents that will help you plan for a situation where you may not be able to make your own decisions. Make sure you use the right document to express your wishes or appoint a decision maker. The documents are:

- 1. Advance Health Directive** – this document allows you to record your decisions about treatment(s) you do or do not want to receive if you become unwell or injured in future. An Advance Health Directive is only used if you are unable to make or communicate your decisions
- 2. Enduring Power of Guardianship** – this document is used to nominate a person who will make lifestyle and treatment decisions on your behalf
- 3. Enduring Power of Attorney** – this document is used to nominate a person who will make financial decisions on your behalf.

For more information about creating these decision-making documents visit the Office of Public Advocate website [www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au](http://www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au) or phone  1300 858 455.

### If you choose not to use a legal document

As an alternate to a legal document, you can complete the Values and Preferences form to reflect your wishes. The form is available at [www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/AdvanceCarePlanning](http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/AdvanceCarePlanning). Provide a copy of the completed form to your support networks, in case of emergency.



## Hierarchy of decision makers

**Where urgent treatment is required (to save your life or prevent pain), your health team can provide treatment without seeking guidance from family or friends.**

Where non-urgent treatment is required, your health team will follow the hierarchy of decision makers.

### 1. Advance Health Directive

If you have an Advance Health Directive (AHD), it will be used to guide your treatment decisions. If you don't have an AHD or it doesn't cover the treatment decision required, then the people below (2-9) will be asked to make decisions on your behalf.



### 2. Enduring Guardian with authority



### 3. Guardian with authority



### 4. Spouse or de facto partner



### 5. Adult son or daughter



### 6. Parent



### 7. Sibling (a brother or sister)




### 8. Primary unpaid caregiver



### 9. Other person with close personal relationship

### Revoking or changing your decision-making documents

To change an Advance Health Directive a new one has to be created. For further information email [acp@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:acp@health.wa.gov.au) or visit [www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/AdvanceCarePlanning](http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/AdvanceCarePlanning)

For information about changing an Enduring Power of Guardianship and Enduring Power of Attorney, call the Office of Public Advocate on  1300 858 455.



## Be Confident

When you are in hospital, do not expect your health team to remember what is in your file. Helpful tips to assist your health team to know who your decision makers are include:

- Hang photos of decision makers next to your hospital bed
- Keep a copy of your Advance Health Directive on your bedside table
- Register your Advance Health Directive on your My Health record
- Use a MedicAlert bracelet so your health team know they can access your information via MedicAlert.

If you are unsure about what questions to ask, Choosing Wisely Australia has developed five great questions to ask your health team before any test, treatment, or procedure.

### The five questions are:

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?

For more information about the five questions visit the Choosing Wisely Australia website  
[www.choosingwisely.org.au](http://www.choosingwisely.org.au)

## Giving informed consent

During your hospital stay you will often be asked to consent to tests, procedures, treatments and other interventions. This consent is called informed consent.

Informed consent is where you have the \*legal capacity to provide consent, and you voluntarily agree without duress to say yes or no to a healthcare test, procedure, treatment, or other intervention.

Before you decide to give your consent, it is important you ask the five Choosing Wisely questions so:

- you have all the information you need to make a decision about your condition
- you understand your treatment options
- you understand the benefits and the risks of the proposed treatment.

You also have the right to ask for a second opinion, before you decide to give consent.

### How is legal capacity determined

For information about \*how legal capacity is determined visit Legal Aid WA website [www.legalaid.wa.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.wa.gov.au) or phone their infoline on  1300 650 579.





# Be Comfortable

When you are in hospital, be comfortable raising concerns about your health and health care. You have a right to health care that is:

- Respectful
- Responsive
- Safe.

If you are concerned you are getting sicker and feel you are not being heard, you can use the Aishwarya’s CARE Call three-step process to raise your concerns.

**Step 1**

If you are worried about a change in your condition or the person you care for, tell a nurse or staff member.



**Step 2**

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



**Step 3**

If your concern is urgent, you can call your hospital’s Aishwarya CARE Call line or use the dedicated Aishwarya’s CARE Call phone installed in some emergency departments.

Each hospital has a different Aishwarya’s CARE Call phone number - ask the Patient Liaison Officer for the correct number.

*If your concerns are not resolved reach out to an independent advocacy agency.*

For more information visit the HealthyWA website at [www.healthywa.wa.gov.au](http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au)

**To find a professional advocate, search on the Ask Izzy website: [www.askizzy.org.au](http://www.askizzy.org.au)**  
Ask Izzy provides information on support services. You can search by postcode across 16 categories, including advocacy.

**An advocate is a person who can help you with a problem. It may be a family member, friend or professional advocate. They will speak up for your rights and interests. For example: by supporting you at meetings.**