

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.

To find a professional advocate, search on the Ask Izzy website: www.askizzy.org.au

Ask Izzy provides information on support services. You can search by postcode across 16 categories, including advocacy.

The Ready to Go Home project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services. Go to www.dss.gov.au for more information.

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 their 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 helps you plan for your preferred treatments, including medical, surgical, and dental treatments, palliative care and life-sustaining measures

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 or phone  1300 858 455.

If you do not have an Advance Health Directive or Enduring Guardian

In circumstances where you are unable to make your own decisions and you do not have legal documents to reflect your wishes, the hospital will follow the hierarchy of decision makers outlined on the following page.



Hierarchy of decision makers

Advance Health Directive

Where an Advance Health Directive (AHD) has been created, it will be followed. The AHD may not be followed where a situation arises that was not expected. In these circumstances, decision makers are selected in the following order.



Enduring Guardian with authority



Guardian with authority



Spouse or de facto partner



Adult son or daughter



Parent



Sibling (a brother or sister)



Primary unpaid caregiver




Other person with close personal relationship

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.

Revoking or changing your decision-making documents

Advance Health Directives can be changed and revoked. For further information call the Advance Care Planning telephone support line

 (08) 9222 2300.

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

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 (see page 5) 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 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 HealthyWA – Aishwarya's CARE website at www.healthywa.gov.au