

## Who can make a treatment decision?



The Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) wrote this factsheet.

When you see the word 'we' it means the people who work at OPA.



We wrote it in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain things.

Hard words are **bold** and **blue**.



You can ask someone to help you read this factsheet.

You can read our Hard Word Factsheet if you need more help.



We wrote this factsheet to explain who can make **treatment decisions** for you if you can't.

## Things you will need to understand

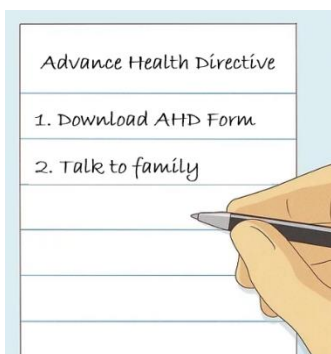


**Treatment** is the medical care given to someone for a health issue, illness or injury.



When we use the word **doctor**, it means any health professional.

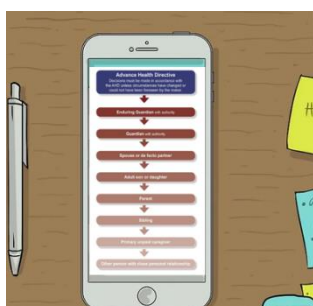
This can include people like doctors, surgeons, nurses, dentists.



When we use the letters **AHD**, they are short for Advance Health Directive.

An **AHD** is a form people fill in.

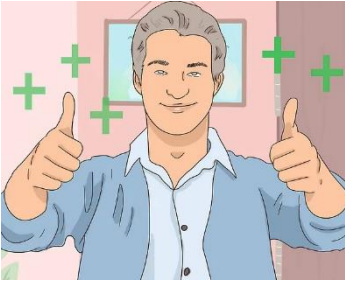
It tells **doctors** what **treatment** a person wants if they can no longer tell the doctor themselves.



When we use the word **list**, it means the **Hierarchy of Decision Makers** list.

The **Hierarchy of Decision Makers** is a list of people who can make treatment decisions for someone else.

## What is treatment?

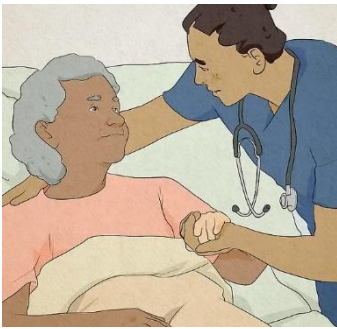


**Treatment** can help you get well.

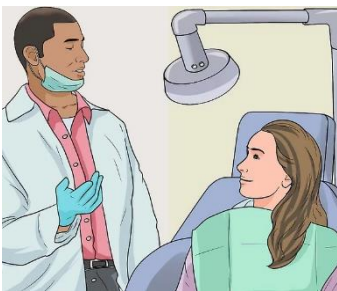
**Treatment** can help you stay well.



**Treatment** can be a medical or surgical procedure.



**Treatment** can sometimes include going to hospital.



**Treatment** can also include palliative, dental and other types of health care.

## What is a treatment decision?



A **treatment** decision can be:

A decision to say 'yes' to receiving a **treatment**

A decision to say 'no' to receiving a **treatment**



A decision to stop receiving an existing **treatment**

A decision to keep receiving an existing **treatment**



There can be lots of different decisions to make,  
or just one.



Some **treatment** decisions are urgent.

Some **treatment** decisions are non-urgent.

## Who makes urgent treatment decisions?



Urgent **treatment** can save someone's life

Urgent **treatment** can stop someone having lots of pain or distress.



When a person needs urgent **treatment**, a **doctor** can treat that person without asking for permission.

This is because the **doctor** may need to act quickly to save that person's life.

## Who makes non-urgent decisions?



If **treatment** is not urgently needed to save a person's life, or stop pain and distress, it is called non-urgent.



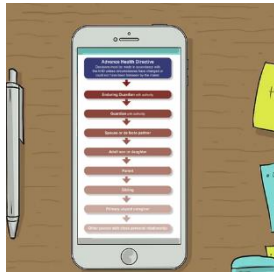
A **doctor** usually has time to discuss non-urgent **treatment** with that person.

But if that person cannot make their own decisions, the **doctor** must find someone else to talk to.



To help the **doctor** decide who to speak to, they use a **list**.

## How does the list work?



This **list** is written in order. The **doctors** must follow this order.

If the top option doesn't work, the **doctor** moves down to the next option, until they find one that works.



These are the options on the **list**:

1. **Advance Health Directive (AHD)**

2 Enduring Guardian with authority

3 Guardian with authority

4 Spouse or de facto partner (e.g. husband/wife)

5 Adult son or daughter (over 18 years old)

6 Mother or father

7 Brother or sister

8 Primary unpaid caregiver

9 Other person with a close personal relationship



## Decision maker examples



A person does not have a partner, an **AHD** or a **guardian**, but they have an adult son.

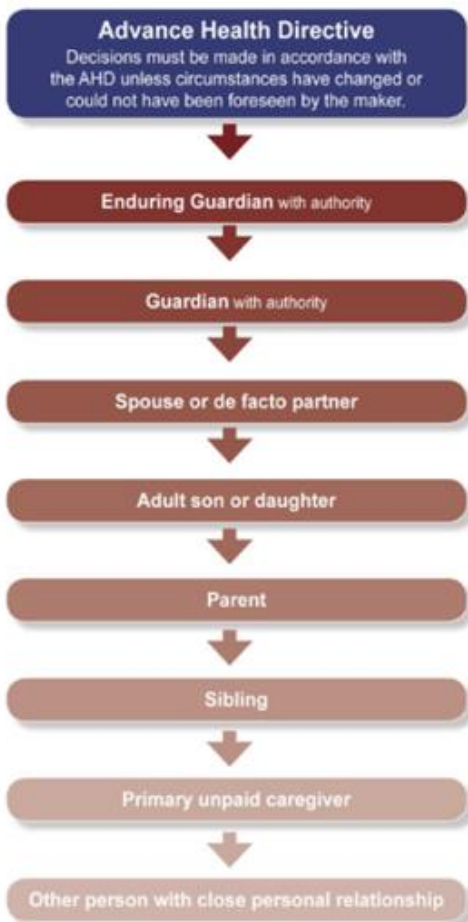
Even though this is lower down, at number five on the **list** – it is the right option for this person.



A person has a wife, adult children and lots of friends to take care of them, but they made an **AHD**.

The **AHD** is what the doctor must refer to first, because this is higher up the **list** – it is the right option for this person.

## Hierarchy of Decision Makers



This is what the **list** looks like in official documents.

It's a good idea to think about who would be on your **list**.

To work out who your decision maker could be, start at the top and stop when you find an option that works for you.

## More information:



The **Office of the Public Advocate** protects the rights of adults with decision-making disabilities and is appointed under the *Guardianship and Administration Act 1990 (WA)*.

You can learn more about what they do by visiting their website:

[www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au](http://www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au).

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