

## I have a guardian how do treatment decisions work?



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 how **treatment decisions** work if you have a **guardian**.

## Things you will need to understand



A **guardian** is a person who makes decisions for someone who can't make their own decisions.



**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.

## Why do people need help with treatment decisions?



Sometimes people have trouble making their own **treatment** decisions.



This could be for a number of reasons, such as having an intellectual disability, mental illness, dementia or an acquired brain injury.



A **guardian** helps a person to make decisions.

A **guardian** can help make treatment decisions.

## What is treatment?



**Treatment** can help you get well.

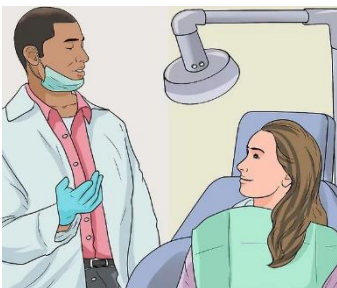
**Treatment** can help you stay well.



**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.

## What is urgent treatment?



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.

## What is non-urgent treatment?



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 and their **guardian**.

## How does a guardian make treatment decisions?



A **guardian** makes **treatment** decisions that are best for the person.



A **guardian** will try to find out what **treatment** that person wants.

But they may not always be able to do what that person wants.



A **guardian's** treatment decisions will follow medical advice.

## What if there is a problem?



A **guardian** will tell the person what they can do if they are unhappy with a **treatment** decision.



A **guardian** will act in the person's best interests.

Even if the **guardian** has to make treatment decisions that make the person unhappy.



The most important thing is to make sure the person receives the **treatment** they need.

## 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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