

# Advance Care Planning

## Fact sheet

An Advance Care Plan is a written statement of your wishes regarding your future medical treatment that is signed and dated. It is sometimes called a 'statement of wishes', 'advance directive' or 'living will'.

It helps those involved in your care to know what you want and makes it easier to convey these wishes to others. Unless it is registered as part of the Enduring Guardianship process an Advance Care Plan does not have any legal standing but it does serve to represent your wishes for care.

It can be changed by you at any time.

An [Enduring Guardianship](#) is a legally binding form of Advance Care Plan which enables you to record and register your wishes and appoint a person to make medical and lifestyle decisions on your behalf.

An Advance Care Plan will be used to guide future medical decisions **ONLY** when you lose the ability to make or communicate your medical treatment decisions yourself.

In this case, a [responsible person](#) or guardian (if appointed) will make medical treatment decisions on your behalf, in consultation with your treating doctors. Medical treatment decisions will be made in your best interests and take into account your written wishes. A responsible person is accorded the same legal status as yourself in the making of decisions. The responsible person can consent to treatment suggested by your doctors.

They can refuse treatment suggested by your doctors if such treatment does not fit within your wishes and beliefs. The Advance Care Plan cannot be used to ask for treatments which are illegal or not considered clinically beneficial by your doctors.

The advantages of the process of developing an Advance Care Plan are that:

- you can have confidence that your wishes are known and clearly stated;
- the health professionals caring for you can feel satisfied knowing they are respecting your wishes; and
- it relieves some of the decision making burden on your family and carers.

If you nominate an Enduring Guardian it is a legal process. It can be reviewed by the Public Guardian and the courts if necessary.

If you complete an Advance Care Plan you may nominate a family member or friend to make important decisions for you when you are unable to make decisions for yourself about medical treatment. Consider providing copies of the document to your family, hospital, local doctor and anyone else whom you feel is appropriate.

If you do not make an Advance Care Plan, your treating doctors will still care for you and provide treatment they feel is in your best interests.

## Further information

[The Guardianship Board of Tasmania](http://www.guardianship.tas.gov.au) has information and the forms to complete an Enduring Guardianship on their website <http://www.guardianship.tas.gov.au> and you can contact them in hours on (03) 6233 3085.

[Respecting Patient Choices](http://www.respectingpatientchoices.org.au) website [www.respectingpatientchoices.org.au](http://www.respectingpatientchoices.org.au) has information specific to each state and territory.

## Related Fact Sheets

Wills and wishes

### CONTACT DETAILS

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