



people with
disabilities
western
australia



HEALTH CONSUMERS'
COUNCIL
YOUR VOICE ON HEALTH

Better Healthcare for People with Disabilities

This booklet talks about healthcare rights, where to go for help and ideas for getting better care. This has been produced by the Health Consumers' Council and People With disabilities WA.



The patient experience is the human experience

Your healthcare rights

In healthcare you have the right to:

- Be treated with respect
- Have an interpreter
- Be treated with dignity
- Feel safe and be safe
- Have privacy
 - Of your body
 - Of your information
- Have time to think and talk about things before making your decision
- Be able to ask questions after an appointment
- Use a communication device
- Have information given to you in a way you prefer
- Receive the same level of care as any other person
- Get a second opinion from another doctor
- Have an advocate or other support person with you
- Be able to ask questions
- Be listened to
- Refuse treatment
- Have your disability taken into account. If needed, this might look like:
 - Having someone stay with you
 - Receiving a special diet
 - Having a quiet area to wait in or a private room
- Have staff ask for your permission before doing things to you

The Australian Charter for Healthcare Rights booklet can be found at the Health Consumers' Council WA website:

<https://www.hconc.org.au/consumer/being-involved-in-your-own-health/self-advocacy-resources/>. This website also contains links to a number of other resources that can help you as you use health services.

You can ask for a copy of the Australian Charter for Healthcare Rights in alternate formats by contacting the Australian Commission for Safety and Quality. Email mail@safetyandquality.gov.au or call 02 9126 3600

AUSTRALIAN CHARTER OF HEALTHCARE RIGHTS

The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights describes the rights of patients and other people using the Australian health system. These rights are essential to make sure that, wherever and whenever care is provided, it is of high quality and is safe.

The Charter recognises that people receiving care and people providing care all have important parts to play in achieving healthcare rights. The Charter allows patients, consumers, families, carers and services providing health care to share an understanding of the rights of people receiving health care. This helps everyone to work together towards a safe and high quality health system. A genuine partnership between patients, consumers and providers is important so that everyone achieves the best possible outcomes.

Guiding Principles

These three principles describe how this Charter applies in the Australian health system.

1 Everyone has the right to be able to access health care and this right is essential for the Charter to be meaningful.

2 The Australian Government commits to international agreements about human rights which recognise everyone's right to have the highest possible standard of physical and mental health.

3 Australia is a society made up of people with different cultures and ways of life, and the Charter acknowledges and respects these differences.



For further information please visit www.safetyandquality.gov.au
AUSTRALIAN COMMISSION FOR SAFETY AND QUALITY IN HEALTHCARE

What can I expect from the Australian health system?

MY RIGHTS	WHAT THIS MEANS
Access I have a right to health care.	I can access services to address my healthcare needs.
Safety I have a right to receive safe and high quality care.	I receive safe and high quality health services, provided with professional care, skill and competence.
Respect I have a right to be shown respect, dignity and consideration.	The care provided shows respect to me and my culture, beliefs, values and personal characteristics.
Communication I have a right to be informed about services, treatment, options and costs in a clear and open way.	I receive open, timely and appropriate communication about my health care in a way I can understand.
Participation I have a right to be included in decisions and choices about my care.	I may join in making decisions and choices about my care and about health service planning.
Privacy I have a right to privacy and confidentiality of my personal information.	My personal privacy is maintained and proper handling of my personal health and other information is assured.
Comment I have a right to comment on my care and to have my concerns addressed.	I can comment on or complain about my care and have my concerns dealt with properly and promptly.

Carer rights

A carer is a person who provides ongoing care to someone with a disability, chronic illness, mental health illness, or a frail person. Often this is a family member or friend. A carer is not paid to provide support

A carer has the right to:

- Be treated with respect and dignity
- Be listened to
- Be included in the decisions that will impact on them and their carer role
- Make complaints to services

The Western Australian Carers Recognition Act 2004 can be found at http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdb/au/legis/wa/consol_act/cra2004197/

Your responsibilities

You have the responsibility to:

- Answer the doctor's questions honestly
- Cancel appointments if you can't attend
- Let the doctor know if something is wrong

Responsibilities of staff

All staff have the responsibility to:

- Speak to YOU
- Respect YOU
- Listen to YOU
- Be honest with YOU

Staff should get to know you by asking you and your carer questions. They should also take time to understand and watch your reactions to what they are doing. Tell the staff if you feel they aren't listening to you.



You can take a photo or print out a list of your medications and allergies. Keep it on your fridge, in your wallet and/or online.

Do I have to have this treatment?

Your treatment is your choice

Before a doctor can do anything to you, they have to explain what the risks are.

“Informed Consent” can only be given if you know about your condition, what treatments can help you, and what is the safest treatment for you.

Here are some questions to ask:

- What is my condition called?
- What are the treatments called?
- What do I need to get better?
- What do I need to do?
- What is good about this treatment?
- What is bad about this treatment?
- How safe is this treatment for ME?
- Has the Doctor done this before?
- What happens if I do nothing?
- How much will it cost?
- How long will it take to recover?

If you have other questions about your health or treatment, you can use this online tool to help work out what you'd like to ask.

Question builder

This tool has been developed by the Australian Government to help people prepare for medical and healthcare appointments. It is free to use. You can use it to prepare for a medical appointment <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/question-builder>

Where to go for help

Talking with staff

If the staff are not explaining things clearly you have the right to:

- Ask them to repeat it
- Ask them to slow down
- Tell them if it is too much information at once
- Ask them if you can talk in a different room or be in a quieter place
- Ask them to explain it another way
 - Ask the doctor to explain with dot-points or with pictures or drawings
 - Ask for a fact-sheet, brochure or website link

You can ask for:

- Translators or interpreters
- Support from a social worker or somebody else

National Relay Service

The National Relay Service is a government initiative that allows people who are deaf, hard of hearing and/or have a speech impairment to make and receive phone calls. More information about the National Relay Service is available at: <https://www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/phone/services-people-disability/accesshub/national-relay-service>

For help with making relay calls, contact the National Relay Service via SMS or Phone between 8am and 6pm Eastern Standard time.

- Phone: 1800 555 660
- Fax: 1800 555 690
- SMS: 0416 001 350
- Email: helpdesk@relayservice.com.au

If things go wrong

Every hospital and health service has a way for you to talk about any concerns you have regarding your care.

If something has gone wrong, you can put in an incident or complaint form.

You can talk to:

- Hospital complaints team
- A nurse unit manager
- A patient liaison officer
- A social worker
- Health Consumers' Council
- People With disabilities WA
- Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre
- Health and Disability Services Complaints Office
- Patient Opinion

If your care was good you can let them know that too! Ask one of the staff for a feedback form.

Patient Opinion

Patient Opinion Australia is an independent feedback service. You can share your story with them about any hospital in WA by email or phone anonymously. Patient Opinion publish the stories on their website and hospitals are expected to respond.

You can share stories where things have gone well, or where things need to be improved.

Patient Opinion has been designed to be easy for everyone to use.

Website: <https://www.patientopinion.org.au/youropinion>

Phone: 1300 662 996



If things go wrong

Health Consumers' Council can help you talk to your medical team. They can also help you put in a complaint or listen to your issue.

- Website: <https://www.hconc.org.au>
- Freecall 1800 620 780 (country only)
- Phone (08) 9221 3422
- email info@hconc.org.au

People With disabilities WA provides non-legal advocacy to people with disabilities. Advocacy is the process of standing alongside individuals to ensure that people are able to speak out, to express their views and uphold their rights.

- Website: <https://www.pwdwa.org>
- 0488 798 615 TEXT ONLY
- Phone (08) 9420 7279
- email info@pwdwa.org

The Health & Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO) is a government service that investigates complaints against any health or disability services.

- Website: <https://www.hadsco.wa.gov.au/home/>
- Phone (08) 6551 7600 or 1800 813 583

How to get better care

Speaking up if you feel unwell

Nobody knows your health like you do. You are the best person to notice any changes in your health.

Your family or carers who spend a lot of time with you may also notice changes in how you look or act, before health care staff notice these changes.

If you or your family or carer notice changes in your health, it's important to let the right person know as soon as possible.

If you are in hospital, press the call bell and ask to speak to:

- A nurse
- A nurse unit manager
- Your doctor

If you still feel unwell after you have spoken to the doctor you can ask them for a second opinion or medical review.

If you are at home you can speak to:

- Your GP
- Your pharmacist
- HealthDirect – tel 1800 022 222
- After-hours GP services
- Emergency department

If you're at home and it is an emergency, you can call an ambulance by calling 000.



Keep a regular GP and pharmacist.

How to get better care

Be involved in your care

You might be cared for by different staff who will keep each other up-to-date about your care and treatment. This might mean that you get asked the same questions by new staff. This is so that they can be sure they have the right information. You should be involved in this process so you know what is going on with your care. Your carer, family members or support workers can also be involved if you would like. If the staff are not explaining things clearly, ask them to repeat it or explain the information another way.

Taking medicines

Medicine is anything you take for your health and wellness. This includes over-the-counter medicine, prescribed vitamins, home remedies, recreational drugs and bush medicines. Make sure you don't take any new medicine without letting the doctor or pharmacist know what you are currently taking. Sometimes you can have a bad reaction to mixing medicines.

Talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist about your medicines

- Are you allergic to anything? (e.g. medicine, food, wound dressings, gloves)
- Tell the doctor if your medicine makes you feel worse or sick
- Tell staff if you have difficulty swallowing your tablets
- Make sure all your medicine is explained to you before you start taking it

Keep a note or take a photo of the medicines you take at home. If you go to hospital, or to see another healthcare professional take this with you. Include:

- The name of the medicine
- The strength of the medicine (e.g. 500mg)
- How much do you take? (e.g. 1 tablet)
- When do you take it?
- Why do you take it?
- What does it do for you?
- When did you start taking it?



Your pharmacist can also contact your GP about your medicine.

How to get better care

Family and carer involvement

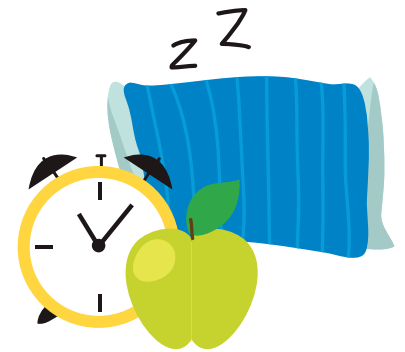
Family and friends who look after you can sometimes be called your Carer. They may talk to health staff on your behalf if you are too sick and not able to talk for yourself.

There are things available to support your family if you are in hospital.

Contact Carers WA for support and information.

Phone 1300 277 377 and ask for the Hospital Team

<https://www.carerswa.asn.au>



Be proactive about your health!

Keep your mind well

Medical appointments, going to hospital and being sick can sometimes be stressful.

You might feel:

- Sad
- Lost
- Worried
- Anxious
- Scared
- Angry
- Confused
- Lonely

It is important you find someone to talk with about how you are feeling. You could talk to family, friends or your GP or specialist about your feelings. You could talk to a member of staff. Or if you'd rather talk to someone else, you can call Beyond Blue who are available 24 hours a day. You can also use the National Relay Service to make the call.

Beyond Blue Support Service

Phone: 1300 22 4636

Website: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support>

Notes



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City West Lotteries House
Unit 23, 2 Delhi Street
West Perth WA 6005

Phone: (08) 9420 7279 | 0488 798 615 TEXT ONLY

Country Callers: 1800 193 331

Email: info@pwdwa.org

www.pwdwa.org

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Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**

This project is an NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) initiative. For more ILC events and resources please visit

<http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/wa-ndis/wa-ndis/information-linkages-and-capacity-building/resources/>