

Help us, help you - Essential contacts

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Family, friends and carers can be important in times of illness.

We need to know your essential contacts. There are two types of contacts:

- Substitute Decision Maker / Person Responsible
- Primary Contact

Your essential contacts may support you in:

- making your health care decisions if you are unable to (Substitute Decision Maker / Person Responsible).
For example, if you:
 - are under general anaesthesia
 - become very unwell
 - had or have an accident or serious illness like a stroke
 - have a serious mental health episode
 - are unconscious
- providing support for you and your family while you are unwell (Primary Contact).

Essential contact for health care decisions

Australian laws provide direction on who can make health care decisions (consent or refusal of medical treatment or health care) if you lose decision making capacity.

Substitute Decision Makers / Persons Responsible can only make health care decisions for you if you cannot, and must make the decision they believe you would have wanted.

Substitute Decision Maker

A Substitute Decision Maker is someone you have legally appointed to make decisions on your behalf. You may have already appointed a Substitute Decision Maker through an Advance Care Directive (may also be known as a Medical Power of Attorney or an Enduring Power of Guardianship). Please advise staff of this essential contact.

If you have a Substitute Decision Maker you will need to bring in the original document (or certified copy) you used to appoint them.

For more information about Advance Care Directives visit www.health.nsw.gov.au

Person Responsible

If you have not appointed a Substitute Decision Maker, a Person Responsible can make decisions on your behalf if you are not able to. A Person Responsible is, in the following order:

- (a) a Guardian appointed by the NSW Trustee and Guardian Board
- (b) a close relative or family member (this includes your wife/husband, domestic partner, children or someone else related to you including under Aboriginal kinship rules or marriage) or
- (c) a close friend

Let us know if you want a specific person to be listed in your medical records as the person who should make health care decisions for you if you cannot yourself.

Primary contact for support

Someone we should contact to pick you up, bring in your clothes or can be asked to do other general tasks. This person might be a neighbour, friend or family member.

Unless they are also your Substitute Decision Maker / Person Responsible, your Primary Contact cannot make any healthcare decisions for you.

It is okay to have the same person as both your Primary Contact and Substitute Decision Maker / Person Responsible.

