

WHAT YOUR PATIENTS MIGHT ASK YOU ABOUT THE ADVANCE HEALTH DIRECTIVE (AHD)

1. Where can I get a copy of AHD?
2. How many people have to sign my AHD to make it legal?
3. How much does it cost to make an AHD?
4. If I have already appointed an Attorney for personal/health matters in an Enduring Power of Attorney form, what is the point of filling out an AHD as well?
5. If I don't arrange an AHD or Enduring Power of Attorney, who will decide what happens to me when I am incapacitated?
6. Why do I have to make an AHD while I am still in good health?
7. Who decides that I have the capacity to make health care decisions in my AHD?
8. How many copies of my AHD do I need, and where should I keep them?
9. Can doctors ignore what I have chosen in my AHD?
10. In my AHD can I instruct my doctor to help me die?
11. It is a long document. Are there any pages that I don't have to fill in?
12. Besides the doctor, my AHD has to be witnessed by either
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3
13. Can I change my mind about what medical treatment I wish to have after I have completed the AHD and had it witnessed?

See over for answers

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AHD Quiz: Answers

1. Download for free from www.justice.qld.gov.au or purchase from Go Print bookshops or newsagencies
2. Two: a doctor and a JP/Commissioner for Declarations/Lawyer/Notary Public. If you appoint an attorney for personal/health matters that person must also sign it.
3. Only the cost of your doctor's consultation fee.
4. The AHD enables you to specify what sort of medical treatment or life sustaining measures you want or don't want if you become incapable of communicating your wishes. This includes instructions about religious customs and palliative care for your comfort and pain relief. An Enduring Power of Attorney for personal/health matters appoints someone to make health care decisions for you but does not give any details of what health care you want or don't want
5. In Queensland the Statutory Attorney makes decisions for you when incapacitated. This is in order, spouse, primary unpaid carer, family member or close friend, or the Adult Guardian as a last resort.
6. Making an AHD involves discussing your future health care choices and end of life treatment with your doctor and whomever you wish to appoint as your attorney for personal/health matters. It is much easier to do this when you are well than during a health crisis when your proposed attorney might not be nearby and your family/carers are stressed and worried about you. If you are not conscious and able to communicate you cannot make an AHD.
7. A doctor. If the doctor is unsure a second medical opinion will be sought from another doctor or a psychiatrist.
8. You might need quite a few copies. You, your attorney/s and your GP should have a copy; the local hospital/s where you might be taken in an emergency or have already been as an in-patient can keep a copy in your medical record; and the residential aged care facility you might live in or move to will appreciate having a copy. There is no point having a copy in the bank vault with your will! Unless your AHD can be found where and when it is needed it will be useless.
9. Your AHD is a legal document. If the doctor is aware of the instructions in your AHD s/he is bound to follow them. However, if the doctor has not read your AHD s/he will be obliged to use all measures to resuscitate you. In Queensland treating someone without their consent can be classed as assault.
10. No. Assisted suicide and euthanasia are against the law of Queensland. An AHD cannot be used to help you break the law.
11. Your AHD can still be valid when the following pages have been struck out because they are not relevant to your wishes:
pages 10 and 11 (terminal, incurable, irreversible conditions);
page 12 (tissue donation);
pages 15-18 (appointment of attorney for personal/health matters).
12. A JP, a commissioner for declarations, a lawyer or a notary public.
13. Yes, but your document will have to be re-written and witnessed.