

Want to Lodge a Complaint?

- 1) Make sure you have raised the issue with the health care provider or staff first before taking next steps.
- 2) If you would like to escalate the matter further, you can lodge a complaint online to the Health Care Complaints Commission at <https://ecomplaints.hccc.nsw.gov.au> or call 1800 043 159.

Need Advocacy Support?

Visit the Official Visitors website <https://officialvisitorsmh.nsw.gov.au/> or call 1800 208 218 for more information.

Need Legal Support

Contact the Mental Health Advocacy Service, Legal Aid on 1300 888 529. You can also visit their website <https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/>

BEING – Mental Health Consumers is the independent, state-wide, peak organisation representing the views, perspectives and experiences of people who live with mental health issues in NSW. Our primary focus is to ensure the voices of people living with mental health issues are heard by decision makers, service providers, and the community, and recognised for the valuable expertise they bring to system and service reform.

Supported by NSW Health, BEING has developed this series of resources to help you learn about your rights as a mental health inpatient under the NSW Mental Health Act and the advocacy supports available to you.

For more information about BEING visit being.org.au contact info@being.org.au or call **1300 234 640**

To view an expanded version of this resource online, scan this QR code.



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Mental Health and Your Rights

Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

What is Electroconvulsive Therapy?

Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is a procedure where small electric currents are passed through the brain, causing a brief seizure. You are under general anaesthetic when this happens.

ECT can only be given at an approved hospital or mental health unit. It can only be given by a doctor who is experienced in giving ECT. A qualified anaesthetist must also be present. The procedure will be explained to you extensively and you should have an opportunity to ask questions.

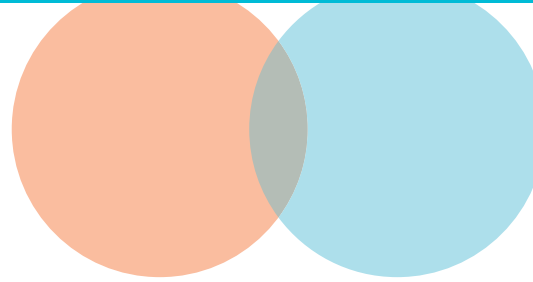
ECT can be given to either people who have voluntarily admitted themselves or been involuntarily admitted to a mental health unit.

If you have voluntarily admitted yourself, you will need to seek approval in writing from at least two medical practitioners before you can receive ECT. To approve your request for ECT, they need to be sure that you are able to provide informed consent and that it is in the best interest of your welfare.

Is ECT Helpful?

ECT can be helpful for some people and is commonly used as a last resort when medication is not effective enough or appropriate to help you manage your mental health symptoms.

ECT may not be suitable, effective, or helpful for everyone. Speak to your treating team or doctor before deciding on whether ECT is right for you.



What is the Maximum Number of ECT Treatments I Can Receive?

The Mental Health Review Tribunal must specify the number of ECT treatments you will be receiving.

The number of ECT treatments usually should not exceed 12 treatments. In some special circumstances, the Mental Health Review Tribunal can approve more if this is beneficial and necessary.

To determine whether more than 12 treatments are required, the doctor would need to clearly explain their reason for the request and would need to submit another application to the Mental Health Review Tribunal asking for more treatments.

How Long Do ECT Orders Last?

Involuntary ECT treatment orders usually last 6 months from the date of the hearing with the Mental Health Review Tribunal.

However, orders can be less than 6 months if this has been specified, or until the time you are no longer under "involuntary" status.

Can I Still Receive ECT Treatment When I'm Out of Hospital?

Yes, in some cases you may require ECT treatment to be continued once you have left the hospital and are back in the community.

This is usually because other types of treatment options have not been effectively managing your symptoms.

The frequency of ECT treatment is usually between weekly and once every few weeks, but can vary from person to person.

EXERCISE YOUR RIGHTS

Can I Decline ECT?

You can decline (withdraw your consent) and stop ECT treatments at any time as long as you have voluntarily admitted yourself to a mental health facility and have not had your status changed to 'involuntary patient'.

For those involuntarily admitted, the Mental Health Review Tribunal can decide to administer ECT either when:

(a) You have given informed consent to receive ECT.

OR

(b) You have not given consent, but it is determined by the Mental Health Review Tribunal as necessary for your safety and welfare.