

## When can a minor access health care without parental consent?

Washington State's general age of majority for health care is 18 ([RCW 26.28.010](#)). However, a minor can receive services without parental consent in the following areas:

<i>Service needed</i>	<i>Parent/ Guardian Consent Required for Care</i>	<i>Parent / Guardian Notification Required</i>	<i>Notes and Source</i>
Emergency medical services:	No, but only if parent's consent is not readily available	No	If the parent's consent is not readily available, the consent requirement is satisfied and the minor can receive medical services. <a href="#">RCW 7.70.050(4)</a> .
Non-emergency medical services:	Yes, unless minor meets Mature Minor Doctrine or is homeless (see definition)	No	If a youth has been identified by their school as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act, the youth may access routine non-emergency medical care with the consent of the school homeless youth liaison, school nurse or school counselor. Also, minors may give a valid consent under the "Mature Minor Doctrine" if the provider deems they are capable of understanding or appreciating the consequences of a medical procedure. In determining whether the patient is a mature minor, providers will evaluate the minor's <b><i>age, intelligence, maturity, training, experience, economic independence or lack thereof, general conduct as an adult and freedom from the control of parents</i></b> . <i>Smith v. Seibly</i> , 72 Wn.2d 16, 21, 431 P.2d 719 (1967).
Immunizations:	Yes, unless minor meets Mature Minor Doctrine	No	Minors may receive immunizations without parental consent under the Mature Minor Doctrine summarized above.
Sexually transmitted disease testing/ treatment (including HIV):	Yes, unless youth is 14 or older.	No	Minors may obtain tests and/or treatment for sexually transmitted diseases if they are <b><u>14 years of age or older</u></b> without the consent of a parent or guardian. <a href="#">RCW 70.24.110</a> .

Birth control services:	No	No	Minors may obtain or refuse birth control services at <b>any age</b> without the consent of a parent or guardian. <a href="#">RCW 9.02.100(1)</a> .
Abortion services:	No	No	Minors may receive an abortion and abortion related services at <b>any age</b> without the consent of a parent, guardian or the man responsible for the pregnancy. <a href="#">RCW 9.02.100(2)</a> ; <i>State v. Koome</i> , 84 Wn.2d 901 (1975).
Prenatal care services:	No	No	Minors may seek prenatal care <b>at any age</b> without the consent of a parent or guardian. <i>State v. Koome</i> , 84 Wn.2d 901 (1975).
Outpatient mental health treatment:	Yes, unless youth is 13 or older.	No	Minors may receive outpatient mental health treatment if they are <b>13 years of age or older</b> without the consent of a parent or guardian. The parents will not be notified without minor consent. <a href="#">RCW 71.34.530</a> .
Inpatient mental health treatment:	Yes, unless youth is 13 or older.	Yes	Minors <b>13 years of age or older</b> may receive inpatient mental health treatment without parental consent. The parents must be notified, however. <a href="#">RCW 71.34.510</a> .
Outpatient substance abuse treatment:	Yes, unless youth is 13 or older.	See Source and Notes section.	Minors <b>13 years of age or older</b> may receive outpatient substance abuse treatment, without parental consent. The provider will inform the parents that the minor is receiving outpatient treatment within seven business days if the minor gives written consent or if the provider determines that the minor is not capable of making a rational choice to receive the treatment. <a href="#">RCW 70.96A.230</a> .
Inpatient substance abuse treatment:	Yes, unless child is determined to be a Child In Need of Services (CHINS)	Yes, unless CHINS	Minors <b>13 years of age or older</b> may receive inpatient substance abuse treatment without parental consent if DSHS determines he or she is a “child in need of services.” <a href="#">RCW 70.96A.235</a> . If school district personnel refer a child to inpatient chemical dependency services, they must notify the parents within 48 hours. <a href="#">RCW 70.96A.096</a> .  Parental notification is required if parental consent is required.

- A legally emancipated minor or a minor married to either an adult or an emancipated minor is treated as an adult.
- Information accurate as of November 5, 2007. For most up-to-date version and related document “A Kinship Caregiver’s Guide To Consenting To Health Care” please visit [www.washingtonlawhelp.org](http://www.washingtonlawhelp.org).
- Unless specified elsewhere in the document, the term “medical services” includes dental, optometry, and naturopathy services.
- RCW – Revised Code of Washington- <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/>

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