

# Summary of Medical Ethics

## Medical ethics

- The Hippocratic Oath.
- Thought to have been drafted around 400 BC by Greek physician/philosopher.
- One of the earliest known formulations of the principles of medical ethics.
- Traditionally recited prior to medical practice.

## The Hippocratic Oath

- In their practice of medicine, doctors were expected to:
  - preserve all human life
  - recognise their limitations
  - renounce self-interest
  - pass on their knowledge to others.

## The four bioethical principles

- Autonomy
- Beneficence
- Non-maleficence
- Justice

## The four principles of medical bioethics

- **Autonomy**
  - Respecting the individual's right to make a decision.
- **Non-maleficence**
  - Avoid harm being caused to the patient.
- **Beneficence**
  - The benefits of the treatment should be balanced against the risks and costs.
- **Justice**
  - Patients with similar illnesses/conditions should be treated equally<sup>1</sup>.

## References

1. Bioethic Tools: Principles of Bioethics University of Washington School of Medicine. Available at [depts.washington.edu/bioethx/tools/princpl.html](https://depts.washington.edu/bioethx/tools/princpl.html)