

# Patient Consent



Before a doctor or other health professional examines or treats you, they need your consent.

Sometimes you can simply tell them whether you agree with their suggestions. Sometimes a written record of your decision is helpful - for example if your treatment involves sedation or general anaesthesia. You will then be asked to sign a consent form.

**If you later change your mind, you are entitled to withdraw consent – even after signing the consent form.**

We want you to make informed decisions about your treatment. We will give you enough information in a way that you can easily understand so that you can give your consent when it is needed.

## What should I know before I make a decision?

The doctor must make sure you know enough so you can choose your treatment. They will talk about the choices of treatment with you. They may recommend a particular option but you are free to choose another. People's feelings vary on things like the amount of risk or pain they are prepared to accept.

That goes for the amount of information too. If you would rather not know about certain things, talk about your concerns with the person who is treating you.

## Should I ask questions?

Always ask anything you want. The person you ask should do his or her best to answer. If they don't know the answer they should find someone else who is able to talk about your concerns.



You might like to bring a friend or relative to support you. Ask if you would like someone independent to speak up for you.

It is sometimes helpful to write down any questions you would like to ask so you do not forget.

## **Is there anything I should tell people?**

If there is any procedure you don't want to happen, you should tell the people treating you. It is also important for them to know about any illnesses or allergies that you may have or have suffered from in the past.

You should also tell your doctor if you think you may be pregnant.

## **What are the key things to remember?**

- It is your decision
- It is up to you to choose whether or not to consent to what is being proposed
- Ask as many questions as you like
- Tell the team about anything that concerns you or about any medication, allergies or past history, which might affect your general health



## **What if I'm not able to take a particular decision?**

Suppose, for example, you are unconscious after a road accident or cannot communicate after a severe stroke, in general people providing health care can still give you treatment that they believe is in your best interests.

The only exception is if you have clearly refused a particular treatment beforehand.