

QUESTIONS A PATIENT MIGHT ASK:

What's wrong with me?

**Exactly what type of procedure or
treatment are you proposing?**

What are the risks of the procedure?

Is there any alternative treatment?

How long will the procedure take?

Is it experimental?

How much will it cost?

Will my health fund cover the cost?

**What drugs will I be given? What
side effects might they have?**

**How long will I be unwell
or unable to work?**

Can I have a second opinion?

If I sign this, what am I agreeing to?

**Can you explain everything again
in terms that I can understand?**



Health Consumers' Council

Unit 13/14 Wellington Fair
4 Lord Street, Perth W.A. 6000
GPO Box C134, Perth W.A. 6839
Ph: 9221 3422 Freecall: 1800 620 780
www.hcc-wa.global.net.au

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Health Consumers' Council
Your Voice on Health

Consent to medical treatment

YOUR RIGHTS

HCCCHCC

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CONSENT: WHAT IT MEANS

No medical treatment can be carried out if you have not given permission to proceed.

By consenting, you are exercising control over what happens to your body.

Because it is your decision, you are responsible for obtaining as much information as you need to make an informed choice.

UNDERSTANDING is crucial to making an informed choice.

If you do not understand any detail of your condition or the treatment, ask more questions.

Every patient has a right to know the details of the treatment they are receiving.

Doctors should give a clear, concise explanation in non-medical terms of your condition, problem or disease and the proposed treatment.

This way, you can make an informed decision about the treatment you are about to undergo.

Information provided should include:

- the reason for the proposed treatment
- the risks involved
- the expected benefits
- alternative treatment options
- whether the treatment is irreversible
- how long the procedure will take
- the likely recovery period
- any costs involved
- any follow up care required

If this information is not provided to you, ask.

You need to discuss the details and risks of the proposed treatment before it occurs.

If the proposed treatment is not acceptable to you, you can refuse it.

You can choose to seek a second opinion on any medical matter you feel unsure of.

You can have as much time as you need to make your decision.

You do not have to say yes immediately after receiving necessary information.

You have the right to withdraw consent or refuse further treatment.

If you need access to your medical records to help you make a decision, discuss this with your doctor.

You have the right to know the costs involved before the treatment begins.

If you are unable or unwilling to meet the costs of private treatment, you can request a referral to a public facility.

You need to be informed of all significant side effects as well as the benefits of drugs prescribed to you.

Where proposed treatment is experimental or part of medical research, you have the right to refuse consent.

CONSENT IN THE TREATMENT OF MINORS

A minor (someone aged less than 18 years) requires consent from a parent or guardian before treatment can commence.

An exception to this is in emergencies, or where the treatment is of a minor nature.

A mature minor can consent to their own treatment as long as they are of sufficient maturity to fully comprehend all the consequences of treatment.

When a parent or guardian consents to treatment on behalf of a minor, they need all relevant information to assist them in making a decision.

CONSENT FROM THE NON-ENGLISH SPEAKER

Consent should only be given by the non-English speaker after an interpreter has been called in for assistance.

The patient must be satisfied that enough information has been given to make an informed decision.

The interpreter should preferably be someone who is familiar with medical terminology and medical procedures and practice.

CONSENT IN EMERGENCIES

Where urgent treatment is required to save a patient's life or prevent harm to his or her health and the patient is not able to consent at the time (for example the patient is unconscious), the patient is deemed to have consented.

Experimental drugs or procedures

You have a legal right to be informed before undergoing experimental treatment or care.

This includes experimental drugs, procedures or therapy.

You have the right to refuse medical students' requests to view a procedure, examination or treatment.

What a consent form asks for:

- your written consent to one or more specific procedures or treatments
- consent to "any other procedure considered necessary" such as surgical treatment not foreseen at the start of treatment
- your acknowledgement that the "nature, intended effects and possible unintended effects" of the procedure have been fully explained
- consent to someone other than your usual doctor performing the procedure
- your witnessed signature