

Specialist Nurses

Specialist nurses perform certain treatments where the same consent criteria apply. However, a specialist nurse will not carry out any procedure under general anaesthetic.

Research

You will not be involved in research without your consent. Any research on human tissue (such as diseased skin, muscle, or organs) removed for medical reasons during an operation or investigation, will also require your separate written consent on the consent form.

Extra procedures

Do write on the consent form any extra procedures that you do not want the doctor to include in your treatment.

Photography and videos

Some kind of photographic record may be made as part of your treatment – for example x-rays, clinical photographs or sometimes a video. You will always be told if this is going to happen. The photographic record will be held as part of your medical record available only to health professionals and yourself. This will only be used for teaching or medical research with your consent.

Questions that you might like to ask the health professional before a treatment

- What are the main treatment options?
- What are the benefits of each option?

- What are the risks, if any, of each option?
- What are the success rates for different options nationally, for his unit or for the surgeon?
- What are the risks of doing nothing?
- How can you expect to feel after the treatment?

You may also want to ask questions about long term effects, such as:

- Will long term care be needed?
- How mobile will you be?
- Will you be able to drive?
- Will it effect work?
- Will it effect personal/sexual relationships?
- Will you be able to exercise?
- Will your diet be affected?

Any further questions?

If you have any further questions about consenting to operation, investigation or treatment, please write to the:
Risk management department,
Whittington Health,
Whittington Hospital
London N19 5NF.

Whittington Health

Magdala Avenue

London

N19 5NF

Phone: 020 7272 3070

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Consenting to treatment, investigation or operation

A patient's guide



.... caring for you

Information for all patients, parents or guardians to consider before being asked to consent to any treatment operation or investigations.

Why do we need your consent?

Competent adult patients have the right in law to agree to or to refuse any treatment. The hospital cannot carry out any treatment without your consent. This can be verbal consent for minor procedures, or written consent for more significant procedures.

What is 'informed consent'? It is having enough information and understanding of your proposed treatment, to make a decision to go ahead with it or not.

It is important. That you know the benefits as well as the significant risks, side effects or possible complications of any treatment, before you decide to go ahead. Some common examples of risks are infection, a blood clot or a reaction to a drug. That you are given the opportunity to be involved in the decision making process with the doctor, nurse or health professional and you know how to get the information you need to make that decision.

Getting the information you need. The GP surgery and/or outpatient visit offer a very important opportunity to find out as much as possible about the planned treatment and what you are agreeing to.

- You may not be able to take in everything that is said at first; but you will get other

opportunities to ask questions both at your medical check-up with a nurse specialist; or immediately before your treatment with a doctor, nurse specialist or health professional.

- Please remember that the doctor, nurse and other health professionals are here to help you, and to answer questions you may have.
- General anaesthetic and sedation have their own special risks: if you have any worries about this you will have the opportunity to talk to your anaesthetist (also a trained doctor) before your operation.
- If you prefer, you can have a friend or relative with you at your medical check-up to support you.
- In many cases you will be given a written patient information leaflet, to reinforce what the doctor has explained to you about your treatment.

If English is not your first language we may be able to arrange an interpreter to help you if you 'phone 020 7288 5191, 5114, 3226, 10 days before your medical check-up.

When should you give your consent to a procedure? Only when you have enough information from the person obtaining your consent for you to understand:

- what is planned
- why it is planned
- possible alternatives (one of which may be to do nothing), and any significant risks.

How final is it?

Once signed or agreed it is not irreversible, you can change your mind and you can cancel the treatment. You can refuse treatment; but you cannot insist that the doctor provides a treatment that is different to that proposed, if she/he feels that it is not in your best interest.

Other things to consider when signing the consent form.

Teaching and further training. Experienced doctors and nurses will have overall responsibility for your treatment. However, teaching medical and nursing students and qualified specialists, is an important part of the work of the hospital.

During the time that you are being treated you may be asked to give your permission (consent) for students to examine you and/or present clinical information about you to others. If you have any objection to this please tell your nurse or doctor. A decision to refuse permission will not affect your treatment or care.

See questions to ask at the end of the leaflet. Please use this information to decide whether or not to agree to treatment.

Doctors

We cannot guarantee that the same doctor who has been treating you so far will actually perform the treatment; but we can assure you that the doctor will be fully qualified.