

Where can I find out more about giving consent?

The Department of Health leaflet:

“Consent – what you have a right to expect”

is a detailed guide on consent in versions for adults, children, parents, carers/relatives and people with learning difficulties.

How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in to or after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

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About the Consent Form

What should I know and what questions to ask?

Patient information leaflet

If you require a translation or an alternative format of this leaflet please call the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on Tel: 01296 316042

Safe & compassionate care,

every time

About the Consent form

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. However, 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.

What should I know before deciding?

Health professionals must ensure you understand sufficiently to enable you to decide about treatment. They'll write information on the consent form and offer you a copy to keep as well as discussing the choices of treatment with you. Although they may well recommend a particular option, you are free to choose another. People's attitudes 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'd rather not know about certain aspects, discuss your worries with whoever is treating you.

Questions to ask health professionals

What are the treatment options?

What are the benefits and risks of each option?

What are the success rates nationally, or locally, or for you (the surgeon)?

Why do you think an operation is necessary?

What are the risks if I decide to do nothing?

How will I feel after the procedure?

When will I get back to work?

Will I need short or long term care?

Will my mobility be affected?

Will I be able to drive?

Will it affect my personal /sexual relationships?

Will I be able to exercise?

Will I be able to follow my usual diet?

What if things don't go as expected?

Amongst the 25, 000 operations taking place- in the UK every day, sometimes things don't go as they should. Although the doctor involved should inform you and your family, often the patient is the first to notice something is amiss.

If you're worried for example about the after effects of an operation – tell a health professional right away. Speak to your GP, or contact your clinic –the phone number should be on your appointment card, letter or consent form copy.

What are the key things to remember?

It's your decision. It is up to you to chose whether or not to consent to what is being proposed. Ask as many questions as you like, and remember to tell the team about anything that concerns you, your medication, allergies or past history which might affect your general health.

Should I ask questions?

Always ask anything you want. The person you ask should do his or her best to answer, but if they don't know they should find someone else who does. To support you and prompt questions, you might like to bring a friend or relative.

Please let us know if you would like someone independent to speak up for you.

Is there anything I should tell people?

If there is any procedure that 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 which you may have or have suffered from in the past.

What about anaesthesia?

If your treatment involves general or regional anaesthesia, you will be given general information about it in advance. You'll also have an opportunity to talk with the anaesthetist when he or she assesses your state of health shortly before treatment.

Hospital's sometimes have pre assessment clinics which provide patients with the opportunity to discuss things a few weeks earlier.

Will samples be taken?

Some operation's involve removing a part of the body (such as a gall bladder or a tooth). You would always be told about this in advance. Other operations may mean taking samples as part of your care. These samples may be of blood or small sections of tissue, for example of an unexplained lump. Such samples may be further checked by other health professionals to ensure the best possible diagnosis and outcome. Again, you should be told in advance if samples are likely to be taken.

Photographs and Videos

As part of your treatment some kind of photographic record may be made, for example X-rays, clinical photographs, or sometimes a video. You will always be told if this is going to happen.

The photograph or recording will be kept with your notes and will be held in confidence as part of your medical record. This means that it will normally be seen only by those involved in providing you with care or those who need to check the quality of care you have received.

The use of photographs and recordings is also extremely important for other NHS work, such as teaching or medical research. However, we will not use yours in a way that might allow you to be identified or recognised without your express permission.