

Informed Consent

Informed consent contains many different components. A key element for informed consent includes explaining the procedure; what to expect pre-procedure, during, post-procedure, and the steps involved. Names and qualifications of the people involved should also be provided, and potential complications from performing and not performing the procedure or treatment should be discussed. A patient should also be made aware of alternative therapies available. Patients have the right to refuse the treatment/procedure at any time, even while the treatment/procedure is being performed. Nurses need to be aware of any restrictions regarding obtaining consent. Nurses can witness consent, but they do not obtain permission for treatments that are performed by others. However, student nurses do not witness consent. In emergencies, if a patient is unable to consent, there are options for proceeding with treatments required to benefit the patient or save their life. A legally authorized person can decide on behalf of the patient, and if this is not an option, a health care provider can conduct life-saving procedures without liability. Special care needs to be considered when acquiring informed consent with patients who are deaf, illiterate or speaks a foreign language. Interpreters are utilized in these situations to provide the patients with a comfortable form of communication and a way to understand the treatment, alternative treatments, and complications properly.



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Key Elements

Names and Qualifications of People Involved

[Certification and Name Tag](#)

The patient has the right to be aware of the people involved in the procedure and their qualifications. The patient should be individually introduced to each person who plays a part in the procedure/treatment.

Explanation of the Procedure

[Explaining the Procedure](#)

The most important step of informed consent is that a patient receives an accurate description of the procedure. What to expect and the steps involved in the procedure should be discussed with the patient. This covers what is expected pre-procedure, during, and post-procedure and includes any discomforts.

Information on Harm that Can Result

[List of Harmful Results](#)

Proper informed consent also includes a discussion about the potential complications and injury that can occur during and as a result of the procedure. The discussion should also include any harm that can occur due to not performing the procedure or treatment.

Alternative Therapies

[Alter of Therapies](#)

Patients have the right to be educated regarding alternative therapies. The alternative treatments can be less invasive, less effective, and not as strongly recommended; however, it is critical for a patient to have complete knowledge and informed consent.

Right to Refuse

[Refusing](#)

A patient has the right to refuse at any point. Although conversations regarding the importance of the treatment can be reiterated, the patient ultimately has the final say. The patient even has the right to refuse while the treatment/procedure is being performed.

Nurses and Consent

Nurses May Witness Consent

[Nurse Witnessing Consent-signature](#)

Nurses can witness consent. They can sign as a witness that the patient appears to give consent voluntarily, is capable of providing consent, and the patient signed in the nurse's presence. Nurses do not obtain consent for procedures that are performed by others.

Student Nurses Do Not Witness Consent

[Student Nurses Do not Witness Consent-signature](#)

Nursing students can not be a witness to consent due to the legal importance of the document.

Emergency

Consent from Legally Authorized Person

[Consent-signature Signed by Parent](#)

In situations where the person cannot consent, consent should be obtained on the patients' behalf by a legally authorized person. A legally authorized person means a parent of a minor, a court-appointed guardian, or a person authorized by the patient by law to act on the patient's behalf.

Life Saving Procedure Without Consent

[Saving a Life Without Consent-signature](#)

If it is impossible to receive consent from the patient or a legally authorized person, a health care provider can conduct a life saving procedure without liability. In these cases, it is assumed that the patient would wish to be treated.

Special Considerations

Deaf, Illiterate, Speaks a Foreign Language

[Interpreter](#)

Individuals who are deaf, illiterate, or speak a foreign language require unique circumstances for consent. Family members or friends who speak a patient's language should not translate health information. A patient who is deaf will need a professional sign language interpreter, an illiterate individual may need a thorough verbal breakdown of the consent/procedure/expected outcomes, and someone who speaks a foreign language should be given an interpreter.