

About the Consent Form

Information for people with
parental responsibility



leeds children's
hospital

caring about children

About the consent form

Before a doctor or other health professional examines or treats a child, they need your consent. Sometimes, you can simply tell them whether you and your child agree with their suggestions; however sometimes, a written record of your decision is helpful (for example, if your child's treatment involves sedation or general anaesthesia). You will then be asked to sign a consent form. If you later change your mind, you're entitled to withdraw consent - even after signing.

What should I know before deciding?

Health professionals must ensure you and your child know enough to enable you to decide about treatment. They will 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're 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 or your child would rather not know about certain aspects, discuss your worries with whoever is treating you.

Should I ask questions?

Always ask anything you want. As a reminder, you can write your questions in the space over the page. The person you ask should do his or her best to answer but if they don't know, they should find someone else who is able to discuss your concerns. To support you and prompt questions, you might like to bring a friend or relative. Ask if you would like someone independent to speak up for you.

Is there anything I should tell people?

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

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 disabilities. Ask for one from your clinic or hospital, order one from the NHS Responseline: **0870 1 555 455** or read it on the web site: www.doh.gov.uk/consent.

Who is treating me?

Amongst the health professionals treating you may be a 'doctor in training' - medically qualified but now doing more specialist training. They range from recently qualified doctors to doctors almost ready to be consultants. They will only carry out procedures for which they have been appropriately trained. Someone senior will supervise - either in person accompanying a less experienced doctor in training or available to advise someone less experienced.

What about anaesthesia?

If your child's treatment involves general or regional anaesthesia (where more than a small part of your child's body is being anaesthetised), you will be given general information about it in advance.

You and your child will also have an opportunity to talk with the anaesthetist when he or she assesses your child's state of health shortly before treatment. Hospitals sometimes have pre-assessment clinics which provide patients with the chance to discuss things a few weeks earlier.

Will samples be taken?

Some kinds of operation 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 child's 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 standards. Again, you should be told in advance if samples are likely to be taken.

Sometimes, samples taken during operations may also be used for teaching, research or public health monitoring in the future interests of all NHS patients. The NHS trust treating your child will have a local system for checking whether you're willing for this to happen.

Photographs and videos

As part of your child's treatment, some kind of photographic record may be made; for example, x-rays, clinical photographs or sometimes, a video. You and your child will be told if this is going to happen, whenever possible. The photograph or recording will be kept with your child's notes and will be held in confidence as part of your child's medical record.

This means that it will normally be seen only by those involved in providing your child with care or those who need to check the quality of care your child has 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 these in a way that might allow your child to be identified or recognised without your express permission.

What if things don't go as expected?

Amongst the 25,000 operations taking place 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 amiss. If you are worried; for example, about the after-effects of an operation continuing much longer than you were told to expect - tell a health professional right away. Speak to your GP or contact your child's clinic - the phone number should be on your child's appointment card, letter or consent form copy.

What are the key things to remember?

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

Questions to ask health professionals

As well as giving you and your child information, health professionals must listen and do their best to answer you and your child's questions. Before your child's next appointment, you can write some down in the space overleaf.

Questions may be about the **treatment itself**; for example

- What are the main treatment options?
- What are the benefits of each of the options?
- What are the risks, if any, of each option?
- What are the success rates for different options - nationally, for this unit or for you (the surgeon)?
- Why do you think an operation (if suggested) is necessary?
- What are the risks if we decide to do nothing for the time being?
- How can my child expect to feel after the procedure?
- When is my child likely to be able to get back to school?

Questions may also be about how the treatment might affect your child's future state of health or style of life; for example

- Will my child's mobility be affected?
- Will it affect my child's education?
- Will my child be able to take part in their favourite sport / exercises?
- Will my child be able to follow their usual diet?

Healthcare professionals should welcome your views and discuss any issues so they can work in partnership with you and your child for the best outcome.

My questions

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What did you think of your care?

Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/nhsleedsfft

Your views matter



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