

Information for pregnant women about 'consent' for tests or treatment

This leaflet is to provide information for those who have been asked to provide consent for a procedure or test.

During pregnancy and labour a woman will be asked, by her midwife or a doctor, to choose whether to have certain tests or procedures performed. Many, such as the blood tests taken in early pregnancy, are done after a conversation between the woman and her midwife, and do not involve the signing of a consent form. The conversation should allow time for a discussion about the purpose of the tests, an opportunity to decide not to have some tests performed and a chance for the mother to ask further questions. This process is called 'giving informed consent'.

Some procedures, such as Caesarean section, do require the mother's signature on a consent form after discussion of all treatment options and risks associated with each option.

Following a landmark legal case in 2015 (Montgomery vs Lanarkshire Health Board) health care professionals are obliged to give women information which;

- Clearly outlines the recommended management strategies and procedures to women including the risks and implications of potential treatment options
- Discusses any alternative treatments
- Discusses the consequences of not performing any treatment or intervention
- Ensures patients have access to high-quality information to aid their decision-making
- Gives women adequate time to reflect before making a decision
- Check women have fully understood their options and the implications
- Documented the above process in the maternity record

Relatives cannot sign on your behalf, nor can they refuse to allow you to have treatment if you choose to have it, or insist that you have a treatment you have decided not to have, even if they don't agree with your decision.

Information sheets on various procedures are available on request.

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

Additional information can be read by following this link;

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/news/membership-news/og-magazine/december-2016/montgomery.pdf>

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Reviewed: Jan 2008, Dec 2008, Jan 2010, Jan 2011, Jan 2013, Aug 2015, July 2017

Approved: Maternity Information Group & Patient information manager, September 2017

Review due: September 2019