

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.

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'. You may change your mind about having certain tests or treatment once you have been given information and had time to weigh up the pros and cons of having or not having what has been offered.

Some procedures, such as Caesarean birth, 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 potential treatment options, ensuring she is aware of both advantages and complications for each option.
- Discusses the consequences of not performing any treatment or intervention.
- Ensures patients have access to high-quality information to aid their decision-making; this might include an information sheet or video clip link.
- Gives women adequate time to reflect before making a decision.
- Check women have fully understood their options and the implications.
- Documents the above process in the maternity record.
- Documents any changes of mind about the treatment / test by the patient 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>

Jane Siddall, Consultant in Feto-Maternal Medicine, July 2003

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