



# Informed Consent

## What are your rights?

### What is informed consent?

Informed consent means that your doctor has explained:

1. Treatment options available to you for your condition
2. Expected outcomes for each option
3. Success rates and possible side-effects for each option

Elective surgery cannot be carried out without your permission and full understanding of the procedure. If you think surgery is your best option, you are required to give your consent “in writing” by signing the hospital consent form.

### What if there is information I do not understand?

While it is the doctor’s responsibility to provide clear information, it is your responsibility to ask questions about anything which you do not understand. Examples may include:

1. What treatment are you suggesting?
2. What are the risks?
3. Are there alternatives?

An interpreter is also available on request by you or your doctor.

### How old do I need to be to give consent?

In most cases, if you are under 16, you will need consent from a parent or guardian. The exception is 14 - 16 year olds who may consent to treatment, if they are considered mature enough.

### What if I’m too sick to give consent?

If you are unable to give consent in an emergency, your doctor will try to get a relative’s consent. In some emergency cases, surgery may go ahead without consent but this is rare.

### What if I’m unable to decide for myself?

If you have a condition which prevents you from making an informed decision, your legal guardian will be asked to provide consent on your behalf.

If there is no legal guardian, a next-of-kin, spouse, de facto partner or carer may give consent. Where there is no one to provide consent, the hospital will contact the Guardianship Board on behalf of the patient. The Board will review treatment options and provide consent for surgery if needed.

### What if I change my mind?

You have the right to withdraw your consent for surgery at anytime. If you have any concerns please discuss with medical or nursing staff.

### More information

If you have any questions about consent, please talk to your doctor or visit  
[www.healthinsite.gov.au/topics/informed\\_consent](http://www.healthinsite.gov.au/topics/informed_consent)