Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Consenting for Treatment or Tests-Maternity Services

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Consenting for Treatment or Tests During Your Maternity Care

Patient Information

Maternity Department

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Introduction

During your pregnancy, labour and during the postnatal period, you will be asked by your Midwife, Doctor, or other healthcare professional, to give consent to, or choose if you want to, have certain tests or procedures for you or your baby.

When you are asked to decide, time should be given for a discussion about the purpose of the test or treatment. You will have the opportunity to ask further questions to help you decide if you want to have or not have the tests/treatments performed. 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 have had time to weigh up the pros and cons of having or not having what has been offered.

Some procedures, for example Caesarean Section or instrumental delivery, do require you to sign a consent form after discussion of all the treatment options and risks associated with each option. For other treatments, you will be asked to agree verbally to the procedure – for example a blood test, an internal examination or when you are offered an injection.

What happens when you are asked to consent?

Following a landmark legal case in 2015, (Montgomery vs Lanarkshire Health Board) health care professionals are obliged to ensure they provide:

- Clear outlines of the potential treatment options, ensuring that you are aware of both advantages and complications for each option.

- Information about the consequences of not performing a treatment or intervention.

- Access to high-quality information to aid your decision-making; if appropriate, this might include an information sheet or video clip link.
- Adequate time to reflect before deciding. This may be very limited in emergency situations.
- Processes to check you have fully understood your options and the implications.
- Documentation of the above process in the maternity record.
- Documentation of any changes of mind about the treatment / test that you might make, in the maternity record.

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

Where can you find more information about Treatments and Tests you are offered?

The care you are offered during your pregnancy should be individualised to your needs. There is information that your Midwife or Doctor will provide to everyone who is pregnant; but there are also individual leaflets for different aspects of care throughout pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period.

These are available in paper form and on the Trust website; they should be provided to you in advance of any decisions you may need to make.

If at any time you feel you need more details to help you decide, please ask your Midwife or Doctor for more information. You can also look on the Maternity Service page on the Trust website:

https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/our-departments?service=62



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