

# Know What Treatment You've Agreed To



Every patient should be aware of the policy of Informed Consent, an ethical standard in medicine that implies that you have been given an explanation and fully understand your treatment. You should be able to explain in your own words what your treatment is about. You should know what the likelihood is that the medical procedure will accomplish what it's supposed to. The benefits and the accompanying risks should always be identified clearly. You should also be notified if your treatment is experimental in nature.

The physician should review any alternatives that are available in lieu of surgery or other procedures. Informed Consent enables you to make a rational and educated decision about your treatment. It is also a tool that promotes greater understanding between you and your doctor and encourages joint decision making. Three principles of Informed Consent that involve your responsibility as a patient are:

- You cannot demand services that go beyond what are considered “acceptable” practices of medicine or that violate professional ethics.
- You must recognize that you may be faced with some uncertainties or unpleasantness.
- You should, if competent, be responsible for your choices and not pass them along to others.