

The treatment itself

- What are the main treatment options?
- What are the benefits of each of the options?
- What are the main risks, of each option?
- What are the success rates for the different options, for you, or nationally?
- Why do you think the treatment suggested is necessary?
- What are the risks if I decide to do nothing for the time being?
- How can I expect to feel after the treatment?
- When am I likely to be able to eat, drink, sit, walk, go back to work?

How the treatment might affect your future health or lifestyle

- Will I need short term home care
- Will I need long term care?
- Will I still be able to drive?
- Will it effect the kind of work I do?
- Will it effect my personal/sexual relationships
- Will I be able to take part in my favourite sport/exercises?
- Will I be able to follow my usual diet?
- What must I avoid for now, and the future?

Health care professionals should welcome your views and discuss any issues so they can work in partnership with you for the best outcome.

The Princess Grace Hospital
42-52 Nottingham Place, London W1U 5NY
Telephone: 020 7486 1234 Fax: 020 7908 2492
www.theprincessgracehospital.com



About the consent form

Before a doctor or any other health professional examines or treats you, they need your consent. Sometimes you can simply tell them whether you agree with their suggestions. However, sometimes a written record of your decision is helpful - for example if your treatment involves sedation or general anaesthesia. You'll then be asked to sign a consent form. If you later change your mind, you are entitled to withdraw consent - even after signing.

What should I know before deciding?

Health professionals must ensure you know enough to enable you to decide about treatment. They will write information on the consent form and offer you a copy to keep as well as discussing the choices of treatment with you.

Although they may well recommend a particular option, you are free to choose another. People's attitudes vary on things like the amount of risk or pain they are prepared to accept. That goes for the amount of information, too. If you would rather not know about certain aspects, discuss your worries with whoever is treating you.

Should I ask questions?

Naturally, a patient is entitled to ask questions. A Consultant, however, is not obliged to advise on every potential outcome of a procedure especially if the benefit outweighs the consequence.

Is there anything I should tell people?

If there is any procedure you don't want to happen, you should tell the people treating you. It is important for them to know about any medications you take, any illness or allergies, which you may have suffered from in the past.

Can I find out more about giving consent?

The Department of Health leaflet, *Consent - what you have a right to expect*, is a detailed guide on consent in versions for adults, children, parents, carers/relatives and people with learning disabilities. You can order one from the NHS Responseline (08701 555 455) or read it on the web site www.doh.uk/consent.

Who is treating me?

Amongst the health professionals treating you may be a "surgeons assistant" or "first assistant" medically qualified or registered nurse, but now doing a more specialist role under direct supervision of the Consultant. They will only carry out procedures for which they have been appropriately trained.

What about anaesthesia?

If your treatment involves general or regional anaesthesia (where more than a small part of your body is being anaesthetised), you'll be given general information about it in advance. You will also be given the opportunity to talk with the anaesthetist when he or she assesses your state of health shortly before the treatment. Some operations require pre-assessment, which provide patients with the chance to discuss things a few weeks earlier.

Will samples be taken?

Some kinds of operation involve removing a part of the body (such as a gall bladder or a tooth). You will always be told about this in advance. Other operations may mean taking samples as part of your care. These samples may be of blood or small sections of tissue, for example of an unexplained lump. Such samples may be further checked by other health professionals to ensure the best possible standards. Again, you should be told in advance if samples are likely to be taken.

Samples are not taken for use in teaching, research or public health monitoring unless you specifically ask for this to happen.

Photographs and videos

As part of your treatment some kind of photographic record may be made - for example X-rays, clinical photographs or sometimes a video. You will always be told if this is going to happen. The photographic or recording will be kept with your notes and will be held in confidence as part of your medical record. This means that it will normally be seen only by those involved in providing you with care or those who need to check the quality of care you have received. The use of photographs and recordings is also extremely important for work such as teaching or research. However, we will not use yours in any way that might allow you to be identified or recognised without your express permission. You may ask to see any photographic record taken and obtain a copy if desired.

What if things do not go as expected?

If you wish to make comments about your stay in the hospital there are Patient Satisfaction Questionnaires in all patient rooms for inpatients and day cases. Every one is read, noted and actioned if required. Alternatively, each floor has a specialist Manager who will be happy to help with any queries.

However, if you would like to contact our Chief Executive Officer directly you can do so by writing to Ms Susan Smith at the hospital address or by emailing info@princessgrace.hcahealthcare.co.uk for the attention of the CEO.

What are the key things to remember?

It is your decision! It's up to you to consider whether or not to consent to what's being proposed. Ask as many questions as you like, and remember to tell the medical team anything that concerns you about any medications, allergies or past history that might affect your general health.

Questions to ask health professionals

As well as giving you information health professionals must listen and do their best to answer your questions. Here are some questions you may wish to know the answer to, although not exhaustive, they may give you an idea about those most commonly asked.