



# **Making informed choices and giving informed consent during pregnancy is essential for ensuring that you feel empowered, respected, and in control of your healthcare decisions.**

Here are some tips for parents on how to handle these aspects effectively:

## **1. Educate Yourself Thoroughly**

- Take time to research and understand the different aspects of pregnancy, childbirth, and postnatal care. Use reliable sources, attend prenatal classes, and consult with your healthcare provider to gather information about your options.

## **2. Ask Questions**

- Whenever your healthcare provider presents a test, procedure, or treatment option, ask questions to fully understand what it involves. Ask about the benefits, risks, alternatives, and what happens if you choose to decline.

## **3. Understand Your Rights**

- Know that you have the right to be fully informed before making any decisions about your care. You also have the right to refuse or request a particular procedure or treatment, and your decisions should be respected.
- Being fully informed means you should have a good understanding of the intended benefits, the possible risks involved and alternative treatment options.
- As a patient, you have the right to know of all material risks before deciding whether or not to consent to the treatment proposed. Arm yourself with knowledge about delivery techniques so that you can make an informed decision if you ever need to make a choice when in labour.

## **4. Take Your Time**

- Don't feel pressured to make immediate decisions. Unless it's an emergency, you have time to consider your options, ask more questions, and consult with others before giving consent. Remember – you can change your mind at any time.

## **5. Discuss Your Preferences Early**

- Early in your pregnancy, discuss your birth preferences and any specific concerns with your healthcare provider. This can help ensure that your wishes are understood and respected throughout your care.

## **6. Review Your Birth Plan with Your Provider**

- Create a birth plan that outlines your preferences for labour and delivery. Review it with your healthcare provider to ensure they understand your choices and can discuss any potential conflicts or concerns.

## **7. Seek a Second Opinion**

- If you're unsure about a recommendation or feel uncomfortable with a proposed course of action, don't hesitate to seek a second opinion from another healthcare provider. It's important to feel confident in your decisions.

## **8. Be Clear About Your Consent**

- When giving consent for a procedure or treatment, be clear about what you are agreeing to. Ensure that you've received all the necessary information and that your consent is given freely, without coercion.

## **9. Know the Difference Between Informed Consent and Assent**

- Informed consent means that you fully understand and agree to a procedure based on all the information provided. Assent is a less formal agreement, often used

when a person isn't fully informed. Always aim for full informed consent.

## **10. Document Your Decisions**

- Keep a record of the decisions you make, including what you've consented to and why. This can be helpful if you need to refer back to your choices or discuss them with other healthcare providers.

## **11. Involve Your Partner or Support Person**

- Involve your partner or a trusted support person in discussions with your healthcare provider. They can help ask questions, provide another perspective, and support you in making informed decisions.

## **12. Stay Updated with Changing Recommendations**

- Medical advice can change as new research emerges. Stay informed about current recommendations and discuss any updates with your healthcare provider to make sure your choices are based on the most recent information.

## **13. Balance Medical Advice with Your Values**

- While medical advice is important, also consider your own values, beliefs, and preferences when making decisions. Your choices should align with what feels right for you and your family.

## **14. Prepare for Emergencies**

- Discuss potential emergency situations and how decisions will be made in such cases. Knowing in

advance how you'll handle unexpected situations can help you feel more prepared and in control.

- Also prepare for the birth itself – do you need to arrange childcare for siblings? It's helpful to have a plan in the event you were to go into labour early.

## **15. Advocate for Yourself**

- Don't be afraid to advocate for yourself if you feel your choices aren't being respected. It's okay to speak up, ask for more information, or insist on a different approach if it better aligns with your needs and preferences.

## **16. Use Decision Aids**

- Consider using decision aids, such as brochures, videos, or online tools, that can help you weigh the pros and cons of different options. These can be valuable in making informed choices.

## **17. Understand the Implications of Declining Care**

- If you choose to decline a particular procedure or treatment, make sure you understand the potential consequences. Discuss alternative approaches and the risks involved with your healthcare provider.

## **18. Stay Calm and Rational**

- In the face of challenging decisions, try to stay calm and make choices based on facts and your informed understanding, rather than fear or pressure. Take time to process the information before deciding.

## **19. Ask for Written Information**

- Request written materials or summaries from your healthcare provider about procedures, treatments, or tests. Having information in writing allows you to review it at your own pace and refer back to it as needed.

## **20. Regularly Reevaluate Your Decisions**

- As your pregnancy progresses, your preferences and circumstances might change. Regularly reevaluate your decisions and communicate any changes to your healthcare provider.