

NZCOM CONSENSUS STATEMENT
Informed Consent and Decision Making
This Consensus Statement was ratified at National Committee Meeting 11 May 1996

The New Zealand College of Midwives believes midwifery care takes place in partnership with women. It is the midwife's professional responsibility to uphold each woman's right to informed decision making throughout the childbirth experience.

Guidelines

- Informed decision-making involves the exchange and understanding of relevant information. Informed decision-making emphasises the autonomy of the individual. It respects the rights of individuals to make decisions about actions, which affect. Making an informed decision is part of a process, which results in either informed consent or refusal.
- Information should be provided in a way that the woman and her family can understand. It must be accurate, objective, relevant and culturally appropriate.
- The information should include:
 - ◆ the proposed treatment/intervention
 - ◆ the benefits of the treatment/intervention
 - ◆ the risks of the treatment/intervention
 - ◆ the alternatives to the treatment proposed and their risks and benefits
 - ◆ what would happen if no treatment/ intervention were used
- Where there is more than one professional perspective on a given issue this should be acknowledged and information given on, and how to access, this perspective.
- Women should be given time to think about the information and discuss it with others.
- Documentation should include a brief outline of the information given and when this occurred. All decisions should be clearly documented. Written consent must be obtained where either party requests it.
- Informed consensus is dynamic. If new evidence comes to light, the woman and the family have the right to change their minds.

References

Title Principles and Guidelines for Informed Choice and Consent
Author Department of Health, 1991
Source New Zealand College of Midwives
 The Code of Rights has replaced this booklet. It does however provide a summary of the rights and responsibilities of healthcare users and providers in making an informed choice and providing informed consent.

Title Code of Health and Disability Services – Consumers Rights
Author Health and Disability Commission
Source HDC, PO Box 1791, Auckland

Title Your Rights When Receiving a Health or Disability Service
Author Health and Disability Commission
Source HDC, PO Box 1791, Auckland

Title Health and Disability Advocacy – Helping you get a Better Service
Author Health and Disability Commission
Source HDC, PO Box 1791, Auckland/Advocacy Services in your area

Title Informed Consent – Issues for Midwives
Author Jackie Pearse
Source Conference Proceedings, 5th National Midwifery Conference, 1998, NZCOM, Christchurch, 2000

The purpose of the New Zealand College of Midwives Consensus Statements is to provide women, midwives and the maternity services with the profession's position on any given situation. The guidelines are designed to educate and support best practice.

All position statements are regularly reviewed and updated in line with evidence-based practice.