



[Home](#) → [Health Topics](#) → [Patient Rights](#)

URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/patientrights.html>

Patient Rights

As a patient, you have certain rights. Some are guaranteed by federal law, such as the right to get a copy of your medical records, and the right to keep them private. Many states have additional laws protecting patients, and healthcare facilities often have a patient bill of rights.


An important patient right is informed consent. This means that if you need a treatment, your health care provider must give you the information you need to make a decision.

Many hospitals have patient advocates who can help you if you have problems. Many states have an ombudsman office for problems with long term care. Your state's department of health may also be able to help.

Start Here

- **Patient Care Partnership: Understanding Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities** [http://www.aha.org/content/00-10/pcp_english_030730.pdf] (American Hospital Association) - **PDF**
Also in Spanish [http://www.aha.org/content/00-10/pcp_spanish_031008.pdf]
- **Patient's Bill of Rights** [<https://www.cancer.org/treatment/finding-and-paying-for-treatment/understanding-financial-and-legal-matters/patients-bill-of-rights.html>] (American Cancer Society)
- **Questions to Ask Your Doctor** [<https://www.ahrq.gov/patients-consumers/patient-involvement/ask-your-doctor/index.html>] (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality)
- **When Health Care Providers May Communicate About You with Your Family, Friends, or Others Involved in Your Care** [https://drupal-hhs-stage3.cloud.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/consumer_ffg.pdf] (Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights) - **PDF**

Related Issues

- **Getting a Second Opinion Before Surgery** [<https://www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/02173-Getting-a-Second-Opinion-Before-Surgery.pdf>] (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) - **PDF**
Also in Spanish [<https://es.medicare.gov/what-medicare-covers/part-b/second-opinions-before-surgery.html>]
- **Informed Consent** [<https://www.cancer.org/treatment/finding-and-paying-for-treatment/understanding-financial-and-legal-matters/informed-consent.html>] (American Cancer Society)
- **Informed Consent (Clinical Trials)** [<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/clinical-trials/patient-safety/informed-consent>]  (National Cancer Institute)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/cancer/tratamiento/estudios-clinicos/seguridad-paciente/consentimiento>]
- **Rights and Responsibilities of VA Patients and Residents of Community Living Centers** [<https://www.va.gov/health>]

_____ 's DECLARATION OF PATIENT RIGHTS

Please insert this document into my medical record.

As the patient in our doctor-patient relationship, I am entitled to the right of informed consent.¹ To make an informed decision regarding the tests, treatment or medications I receive, I need to know both the benefits and the risks. This would include the side effects or adverse reactions of any medication - including vaccines - that you might prescribe.

I also reserve the right to seek a second opinion.

My refusal of any test, treatment or medication should not be charted as me being non-compliant, but as me denying my consent based on my right to assess both the risks and the benefits.

NOTE

You can use this declaration to defend against any accusation of failure to adhere to the current "standard of care", should I refuse any procedure or treatment considered "standard of care", which many physicians have concluded² are not always the best course of action for ALL patients.

For your protection, keep a copy of this declaration in your personal files.

Print name capitalizing only the first letters

date of birth

Signature

Date

¹ For confirmation see: <https://medlineplus.gov/patientrights.html>

² For confirmation see: *Modern Medicine at the Crossroads*; Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons, Fall 2015; <http://www.jpands.org/vol20no3/miller.pdf>