

Understanding Informed Decision-Making

Educational guide for Llamamma

You Have the Right to Make Informed Decisions

Every person giving birth has the right to understand their options and participate in decisions about their care. Informed decision-making means your healthcare provider explains why a recommendation is being made, the potential benefits, possible risks, reasonable alternatives, and what may happen if you choose to wait or decline. Being informed does not mean you must agree to a recommendation. Whenever possible—and when there is not an emergency—you have the right to ask questions, request more information, involve your support team, and take time to consider your options.

Use the BRAIN Framework

B — Benefits

What are the potential benefits of this recommendation?

R — Risks

What are the possible risks or downsides?

A — Alternatives

Are there other reasonable options?

I — Intuition / Individual Circumstances

What is my intuition telling me? How does this fit my values, preferences, and unique situation?

N — Nothing (or Not Now)

What may happen if we wait? What happens if we choose not to act right now?

Shared Decision-Making

Good informed consent is a conversation—not simply signing a form. A helpful process often includes:

1. Understanding all reasonable options.
2. Learning the benefits and risks of each option.
3. Having the opportunity to ask questions.
4. Receiving answers you understand.
5. Discussing your choices with your support team when time allows.
6. Making a decision that reflects your goals and values.
7. Having your informed decision respected whenever it is safe and medically appropriate.

Remember

Most decisions during labor are not emergencies. If you and your baby are stable, it is often reasonable to ask, "Can you help me understand my options?" or "Do we have a few minutes to talk through this together?" The goal is not to refuse care—it is to make informed decisions with your healthcare team based on the best available evidence and your individual circumstances.