



Informed Reproductive Choices: Empowering Decision Making

Understanding Informed Choice

Informed choice involves presenting individuals with several intervention or treatment options, educating them about each option's details, risks, benefits, and outcomes, and empowering them to select the option that best suits their needs.¹ The ultimate goal of informed choice is to honour patient autonomy and empowerment in reproductive healthcare decision making.²

Informed Consent vs. Informed Choice

- **Informed Consent:** Occurs when a person agrees to the test or treatment that they have been offered, knowing the details, benefits, risks, and expected outcomes.³
- **Informed Choice:** Involves providing individuals with comprehensive information on all available reproductive options, allowing them to make an informed decision by understanding the details, benefits, risks, and expected outcomes of each option.³



The Importance of Informed Choices

- **Autonomy:** Upholding an individual's right to make independent decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.
- **Empowerment:** Providing individuals with the necessary tools and knowledge to actively participate in sexual and reproductive health care choices.
- **Respect for Rights:** Ensuring access to accurate and unbiased information as a fundamental right.

Requirements for Informed Choice

Informed choice necessitates:

1. **Clear and Transparent Information:** Providing easy to understand information about the benefits, risks, and harms of all available options.⁴
2. **Understanding Patient Values:** Engaging patients and families to identify their goals and values in the decision-making process.⁴
3. **Unbiased Support:** Offering impartial guidance in making decisions without bias.⁴

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Implementing Informed Choice in Practice

For First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Women and Girls⁵:

- Ensuring full awareness of options and risks related to all forms of birth control and other sexual and reproductive health procedures and treatments.
- Comprehension of the provided information and complete control over decisions about their own sexual and reproductive health and bodies

To achieve this⁵:

- **Transparency and Accessibility:** Information must be transparent, reliable, in plain language, and available in their preferred language.
- **Encouraging Dialogue:** Individuals should be encouraged and supported to ask questions of healthcare providers and have them addressed before making decisions.
- **Time for Informed Choice:** Adequate time must be provided to facilitate informed decision making before consent is given.

References:

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2. Paterick, Z. R., Paterick, T. E., & Paterick, B. B. (2020). Medical informed choice: understanding the element of time to meet the standard of care for valid informed consent. *Postgraduate medical journal*, 96(1141), 708-710.
3. SickKids Staff. (2009). *Informed choice and informed consent*. AboutKidsHealth. <https://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/Article?contentid=389&language=English>
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5. National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (2021). *Informed Choice and Consent in First Nations, Inuit and Métis Women's Health Services*. Prince George, BC: National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health

