

MAKING INFORMED MEDICAL DECISIONS

WHAT IS AN INFORMED MEDICAL DECISION?

Informed medical decision making is the process where your doctors talk with you about your treatment options. You consider your values and goals. You and your doctor develop and agree on a plan to manage your medical care. This agreement is called consent.

WHAT IS INFORMED CONSENT?

Informed consent is a process in which you are told:

- what is believed to be making you sick or causing you problems,
- the plan for your care, including tests and procedures,
- how the treatment might help or harm you (benefits and risks),
- what other choices you have,
- what might happen if you make different choices,
- the doctors' names who will help with the test or procedure.

Use this information, talk to your family, another doctor or advisors, to make a decision you think is in your best interest.

IF YOU ARE ASKED TO SIGN A CONSENT FORM TO SHOW YOUR AGREEMENT:

- The consent form is a legal document. It records the information above.
- You need to read this form and/or have it explained to you.
- If you are ready and agree to the test or procedure, you sign the form.

You may want someone with you to help you ask questions. We will provide an interpreter if you do not speak or understand English or are hard of hearing.

If you are too sick to understand and to speak, we will ask the person you have named to make decisions for you. Legally this person is called an "Agent" in an Advance Directive. If you would like more information, ask for the booklet, "Your Right to Decide".

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Talk to your doctor(s).
- Search the internet (www.medlineplus.gov) to find more about diseases or conditions.

We encourage patients and their families to be involved partners in their medical care.