



Informed Patient Decisions

An important part of providing appropriate clinical care to patients is ensuring that all patients are fully informed, allowing them to make decisions about their health care. Doctors shall explain the purpose, importance, benefits and risks of proposed investigations, referrals and treatments.

It is crucial that this information is clearly explained using easy to understand language. This is particularly important where sensitive issues and investigations are involved. The Doctor may choose to use diagrams or written information to assist the patient to make an informed decision when appropriate.

It is important to create an understanding of shared responsibility between the patient and the Practice. It is also appropriate for patients to be fully informed about prescribed medications and medicine safety. This may be achieved by referring patients to the large range of information and leaflets about medicines available on the www.racgp.org.au/medicines/ website.

RACGP Standards

- 1.2.2** *Our practice gives patients sufficient information about the purpose, importance, benefits and risks associated with proposed investigations, referrals or treatments to enable patients to make informed decisions about their health.*

Assessment methods

- Interviews with practitioners

Surveyors will ask GPs to explain how they inform their patients about the benefits and risks of proposed treatments, tests or investigations. GPs shall be able to describe how they use leaflets, brochures or written information to support their explanation of the diagnosis and proposed management.

- Patient feedback surveys

Meeting the Standards

It is crucial that this information is clearly explained using easy to understand language. This is particularly important where sensitive issues and investigations are involved. The Doctor may choose to use diagrams or written information to assist the patient to make an informed decision when appropriate.

It is ultimately the patient's decision to follow the advice of the Doctor after receiving sufficient information to make an informed decision about their health care. Should a patient choose to disregard the Doctor's recommendations, such refusal should be documented in the patient health record.

Ideally the GPs should also be able to describe how they provide information about medicines or medicine safety to patients.

The Practice shall gather feedback from patients to establish whether the GP(s) supply sufficient information allowing patients to make informed decisions about their health.