

# Quick Guide to

# INFORMED CONSENT & REFUSAL

during hospital birth



The most important right you have in your healthcare is that of informed consent and refusal. It is based on the concept that you have autonomy over your body and in your healthcare - including when you are pregnant. You own your body!

Informed consent means you fully understand and freely choose what happens to you in your healthcare, based on thorough discussion of the risks, benefits, and options. Refusal means you have the right to say "No" at any time.

## YOUR CARE PROVIDER SHOULD:

- ▼ **DISCUSS WITH YOU**
  - ▼ Your individual health circumstances
  - ▼ Risks and potential benefits of the treatment they recommend
  - ▼ Alternatives of that treatment, with their risks and potential benefits
  - ▼ Options of doing nothing or waiting
  - ▼ Any questions you may have
- ▼ Get your **CONSENT** ("Yes") before doing anything, or
- ▼ Respect your **REFUSAL** ("No") if you decline any intervention

## REMEMBER:

Refusal of medical treatment is a basic right that has been strongly upheld by U.S. courts. The right to say "no" (refusal) is what gives your "yes" (consent) its power. National policy for obstetricians says that just like other patients, pregnant people have "the right to refuse treatment, even treatment required to maintain life."

See "Refusal of Medically Recommended Treatment in Pregnancy," American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists Committee on Ethics, June 2016

You may change your mind and revoke consent at any time. No one has the right to touch you without your permission. **You own your body.**