CANCER EXPLAINED PRESENTS



A PLAIN-LANGUAGE GUIDE

UNDERSTANDING INFORMED CONSENT

Your rights before and during a clinical trial

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A CANCER EXPLAINED HANDOUT · BASED ON **NCI** · UPDATED **2026-07-05**
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cancer explained.org

1 What informed consent is

- [ ] A process — not just a signature — that explains a study before you decide to join.
- [ ] The research team walks you through the study's purpose, procedures, schedule, and possible benefits and risks.
- [ ] You receive the information in writing and can take it home to review with family or your doctor.

2 What the consent form covers

- [ ] Why the study is being done and what treatments or tests are involved.
- [ ] Possible risks, side effects, and benefits — including unknowns.
- [ ] What costs are covered by the study sponsor and what may fall to you or your insurance.
- [ ] How your personal information will be protected.

3 Your rights, always

- [ ] Joining is completely voluntary — declining does not affect your standard care.
- [ ] You can ask questions at any time, before and during the study.
- [ ] You can leave the trial at any time, for any reason.
- [ ] You will be told about new information that might affect your willingness to continue.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Consent is an ongoing conversation. If anything is unclear, ask — the research team is required to explain until it makes sense.

Sources: NCI: Patient safety in trials (cancer.gov/research/participate/clinical-trials/safety) · NCI: Clinical trials information (cancer.gov/research/participate/clinical-trials)

Learn more in plain language: cancerexplained.org/clinical-trials/how-they-work · **Updated:** 2026-07-05

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