



Making decisions about your care

When you need to make a decision about your care, the law says that your doctor or midwife should give you all the information you need to help you make a decision that is right for you. This is informed consent.

You must be given clear and factual information

Risks should be given in a format that makes sense to you. Where possible, the risk should be given as a probability or a percentage figure. Eg. 1 in 100 or 1%

If you are only told that a risk doubles or increases, ask what the actual risk is.

You could ask your midwife or doctor to discuss how good the evidence is.

You may be given a leaflet or a webpage to read. You should always have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss your thoughts and feelings.



You need to be told the risks and benefits of every option

This must include the risks of the care your doctor or midwife is recommending.

If you haven't been told the risks and benefits of each option, then ask your doctor or midwife for more information.



BRAINS can help you ask questions

B = What are the **B**enefits?
R = What are the **R**isks?
A = What are the **A**lternatives?
I = What does your **I**ntuition or gut tell you?
N = What happens if we do **N**othing for now?
S = Can you get a **S**econd opinion? Who else can you talk to about this?



It is not okay to feel pressured or guilty into making a decision

Doctors and midwives should use factual information and they should not use 'coercive' language. This means it is not okay for you to feel pushed towards making a particular decision.

If this happens you could ask for your named midwife to support you.

Or ask to speak to a manager or Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) to help you decide.



You can say no

One of your options is to decline the recommended care.

Your midwife or doctor will respect your decision and work with you to create a personalised care and support plan.



Once you have all the facts you are the best person to make the decision that is right for you

Everyone is different. Your previous history and your personal circumstances will influence your decision.

Your doctors and midwives will look after you, whatever you decide.

