

# Informed consent for local anesthesia

B Rai

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## Abstract

Laws regarding informed consent vary from country to country. In Indian dentistry, written informed consent usually is obtained for anesthesia involving sedation or general anesthesia, but not for local anesthesia administration. Although local anesthesia is extremely safe; some of more common rare more serious complications that may occur secondary to the administration of local anesthesia. So, all dentists must obtain written informed consent for the administration of local anesthetic.

## INTRODUCTION

Consent means voluntary agreement compliance or permission. Consent may be expressed and implied. Laws regarding informed consent vary from country to country. It is important to remember that having a patient sign a written consent form does not excuse the dentist from the responsibility of having an adequate discussion with the patient about the proposed treatment and explaining the risks benefits and possible alternatives to the proposed treatment.<sup>1</sup> Informed consent generally is required for a health care professional to validly defend against liability from responsibility for complications that may occur during treatment or observation.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this article is to strength importance of informed consent before local anesthesia.

Obtaining consent<sup>3</sup>: To examine, treat, manage or operate upon a patient without consent is assault in law, even if it is beneficial and done in good faith. The patient may recover damages. If a doctor fails to give the required information to patient before asking for his consent to a particular operation or treatment, he may be charged for negligence.

## WHY INFORMED CONSENT IN DENTISTRY FOR ADMINISTRATION OF LOCAL ANESTHESIA

Dentist generally informs patients about both simple, common complications and serious, rare complications that can occur with the proposed procedures; and in doing so, they cover both extremes of the spectrum of complications. Local anesthesia is extremely safe. The most common complications that may occur while the administering of local anesthetic in dentistry are ecchymosis and analgesia. The rare and more serious complications are paresthesia or permanent anesthesia and some life

threatening conditions<sup>4,5,6</sup>. If a complication occurs and informed consent was not obtained in writing, the dentist may be placed in a difficult position to convince a jury.

The dental practitioners are not required to obtain informed consent during emergency procedure, secondary to a valid waiver, modifying procedure's such as cavity preparation from a class I to class II, or from an inlay to an onlay.<sup>2</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In dental college or any dental clinic, written informed consent usually is obtained for anesthesia involving sedation or general anesthesia, as it is for many other procedures, but not for administration of local anesthesia. Local anesthesia is extremely safe, the most common to rare serious complications have been reported. So the existence or lack of written informed consent can have significant implications if a malpractice action is considered after treatment is rendered. All dentists must obtain written informed consent before administering local anesthetic.

## CORRESPONDENCE TO

Dr. Balwant Rai S/o Sh. Ramsawroop Vill. Bhangu, Distt. Sirsa, P.O. Sahuwala I, E-mail : drbalwantraissct@rediffmail.com Mobile No. : 091-9812185855

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**Author Information**

**Balwant Rai**

B.D.S. Resident, Government Dental College, Pt. Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, Post Graduate Institute of Medical Science