

Guidelines for Writing Consent Forms

- 1) **When possible, simplify sentences with *you* as the subject to make them active and simpler.**

“You do not have to take part in this research study.”

Instead of...

“Taking part in this research study is voluntary.”

- 2) **Generally, avoid use of passive voice, except when it places key “content” words at the beginning of the sentence.**

- 3) **Avoid long introductory phrases and clauses. The main subject and verb should be at the beginning of the sentence.**

“You should not become pregnant or father a baby while on this study because of drugs you will take that might hurt an unborn baby.”

Instead of...

“Because the drugs of this study can affect an unborn baby, you should not become pregnant or father a baby while on this study.”

- 4) **Keep sentences short by avoiding added phrases & clauses after the main part of the sentence. When editing your consent form, break up long, cumbersome sentences.**

- 5) **When writing a complex sentence, connect the parts of the sentence with words like “and” or “but” or “because” instead of words/phrases like “regarding” “as a result of.”**

- 6) **Put technical terms in quotations (eg. "indwelling catheter port")**

- 7) **Repeat terms/phrases instead of using similar terms/phrases for variety.**

- 8) **Write lists as bulleted items instead of listing multiple items within a sentence.**