

# Tips and Pearls on Consent Forms for Surgical and Cosmetic Procedures in Dermatology

PAC Pearls by the Women's Dermatologic Society

The WDS Practice Advisory Committee (PAC) shares tips and advice for optimizing consent forms for surgical and cosmetic procedures in dermatology.

## Include Patient Discussions in Office Notes

Don't forget that a form may not always protect you. It is just as important, if not more, to include the discussion you had with the patient in your office note. The patient can always claim that they didn't read a form that was put in front of them.

- *Mark Kaufmann, MD*

## Focus on Patient Dialogue

More important than a signed consent form, is a dialogue with the patient to convey the risks, benefits and alternatives of a procedure or intervention, and determining that the patient understands the dialogue as it is pertinent to them.

Also, consider having a witness print their name and sign as well as the patient on the consent form.

- *Monica Li, MD, FRCPC, FAAD*

## Increase Patient Compliance after a New Procedure

Give patients a follow up call the day after a new procedure. This can be delegated out to office staff if needed. Patients usually have questions or concerns the day after experiencing a new procedure and they always really appreciate the call. This simple step increases patient compliance with post procedure instructions, decreases incoming patient calls to the office and patient complaints, improves outcomes, and sets you apart from other providers that wouldn't take the time to do this.

- *Jeanette Black, MD*

## Use Simple Consistent Phrasing

Phrase in simple language with the patient in first person and divide out into two categories: "I will have ..." and "I may experience ..."

Add the exact same phrasing to patient after visit summary/after care instructions and the notes to keep things consistent.

- *Lori Fiessinger, MD*