

RESPECTFUL MATERNAL AND NEWBORN CARE

These rights are grounded in international human rights principles and WHO guidance on respectful maternal and newborn care. [\[who.int\]](#), [\[who.int\]](#)

Rights of Women During Childbirth

1. **Right to dignity and respect**
 - To be treated with courtesy, kindness, and compassion at all times.
 - To be free from humiliation, insults, or degrading treatment. [\[who.int\]](#), [\[healthynew...etwork.org\]](#)
2. **Right to equality and non-discrimination**
 - To receive the same quality of care regardless of age, race, ethnicity, nationality, disability, religion, HIV status, marital status, or socioeconomic status. [\[healthynew...etwork.org\]](#), [\[link.springer.com\]](#)
3. **Right to information**
 - To receive clear, accurate, understandable information about their condition, care, and treatment options.
 - To ask questions and receive answers. [\[healthynew...etwork.org\]](#), [\[who.int\]](#)
4. **Right to informed consent and informed refusal**
 - No examination, procedure, induction, episiotomy, caesarean section, or other intervention should be performed without informed consent, except in limited emergencies permitted by law. [\[who.int\]](#), [\[healthynew...etwork.org\]](#)
5. **Right to participation in decision-making**
 - To be actively involved in decisions regarding their childbirth care.
 - To have their preferences and choices respected whenever medically appropriate. [\[who.int\]](#), [\[publicnow.com\]](#)
6. **Right to privacy and confidentiality**
 - To have personal information protected.
 - To receive care in a manner that respects physical and informational privacy. [\[healthynew...etwork.org\]](#), [\[who.int\]](#)
7. **Right to freedom from abuse and mistreatment**
 - To be free from physical abuse, verbal abuse, coercion, neglect, discrimination, unnecessary restraint, or detention in health facilities. [\[who.int\]](#), [\[healthynew...etwork.org\]](#)
8. **Right to a companion of choice**
 - To have a support person of their choice present during labour and childbirth, where feasible and safe. [\[healthynew...etwork.org\]](#), [\[who.int\]](#)
9. **Right to the highest attainable standard of health**
 - To receive safe, evidence-based, timely, and quality maternal care from competent health professionals. [\[healthynew...etwork.org\]](#), [\[who.int\]](#)
10. **Right to bodily autonomy**
 - To have control over their body and reproductive health decisions.
 - To have their preferences and values respected. [\[link.springer.com\]](#), [\[healthynew...etwork.org\]](#)
11. **Right to freedom from violence**

- To be protected from physical, psychological, or emotional violence in healthcare settings. [\[healthynew...etwork.org\]](#), [\[who.int\]](#)

12. **Right to complain and seek redress**

- To report poor treatment, abuse, or violations of rights and receive a fair response without fear of retaliation. [\[who.int\]](#), [\[who.int\]](#)

WOMEN'S RESPONSIBILITIES IN CHILDBIRTH

While the **Respectful Maternity Care Charter** primarily focuses on the **rights of women and newborns**, rights are often accompanied by responsibilities that support a respectful, safe, and effective partnership between women, families, communities, and healthcare providers. [\[healthynew...etwork.org\]](#), [\[healthynew...etwork.org\]](#)

Women's responsibilities may include:

- **Providing accurate health information** to healthcare providers to support appropriate care and decision-making.
- **Participating in informed decision-making**, asking questions when information is unclear, and communicating preferences and concerns.
- **Following agreed care plans** and seeking clarification when recommendations cannot be followed.
- **Treating healthcare workers and other patients with respect and dignity**, just as women are entitled to be treated respectfully.
- **Seeking timely antenatal, intrapartum, postnatal, and newborn care** whenever possible.
- **Supporting the health and well-being of the newborn**, including recommended feeding, immunization, and follow-up care.
- **Respecting facility policies** that are designed to protect safety, privacy, and quality of care, provided these policies do not violate human rights.
- **Reporting disrespect, abuse, unsafe practices, or poor-quality care** to help improve services for all women and newborns.
- **Participating in birth preparedness and complication readiness**, with family support where appropriate.

Women are rights-holders, not recipients of privileges. Their responsibilities do not diminish their rights; rather, they promote a collaborative partnership that enables respectful, high-quality maternal and newborn care. [\[healthynew...etwork.org\]](#), [\[healthynew...etwork.org\]](#)