

# **Minors and Medical Treatment - Parental Consent**

Generally, parental consent is required before a minor can receive medical treatment. Most states define a minor as a person under the age of 18. State laws make an exception to the parental consent requirement in emergency situations. Minors can receive emergency medical treatment without parental consent.

Emancipated minors can make medical decisions without parental consent. A minor becomes emancipated by getting married, joining the armed forces, or obtaining a court order declaring him or her to be emancipated.

## **Mature Minor Laws**

Some states have adopted "mature minor" laws. These laws permit minors of a certain age to make decisions about their medical treatment without parental consent. The statutory age of mature minors varies by state.

## **Reproductive Decisions**

In most states, minors can obtain contraceptive services without parental consent.

The United States Supreme Court has held that minors have a legal right to obtain an abortion. Most states have laws requiring parental consent or parental notification before a minor can have an abortion. However, a judge may authorize an abortion in the absence of parental consent or notification if the judge determines that the minor is mature enough to make the decision and the abortion is in her best interest.

## **Treatment and Counseling**

Many states have enacted laws that permit minors to obtain treatment for venereal diseases and treatment or counseling for substance abuse and mental illness without parental consent.