A new video to help patients understand port installation could soon change how patients agree to medical procedures.

Although it’s a fairly common process, doctors don’t always explain port installation as simply as patients might prefer, explained Ziga Cizman, an interventional radiologist who is leading the development of the consent video.

“We wanted to create a media where we could tell how the procedure works, the risks, the benefits and have it in a format that is easily digestible and can be viewed at any point,” he said.

A port is a reservoir under the skin connected by catheter tubing to a blood vessel. Patients requiring multiple IVs may have damaged blood vessels that make it difficult and painful to access veins. A port allows providers to offer treatment ranging from blood transfusions to chemotherapy without having to repeatedly access a vein.

But the installation process can be difficult to describe and sometimes challenging for doctors to avoid medical jargon.

“So we wanted to show them a story about why they’re getting the port,” Cizman said.

Imagine Perfect Care dollars paid for a video editor, design and research. Now the video is in the process of being edited. If it proves to be beneficial to patients, Cizman hopes to make additional videos in the future.

The goal is for patients to watch it to help them decide whether they want to agree to the port installation. By watching it before meeting with their doctor, patients can reflect on the procedure and come prepared to discuss any questions or concerns.

Cizman plans to study the impact of the video compared to the standard consent process.

Some patients don’t want to burden physicians with questions. Others forget what they want to ask. Whatever the reason, Cizman has noticed patients agreeing to procedures without fully understanding what’s about to happen.
“Showing them what things are going to happen before the procedure — some of that will relieve their anxiety so they can focus instead on the benefits of getting the port,” he said.

Though the total procedure is 35 minutes, the consent video will only be 5 minutes long and made to be accessible by patients of a variety of education levels. If it is successful, it could also be used to explain other kinds of procedures.

While other medical videos already exist, many of them are focused on a medical audience — not the average patient. That is also true with much of the medical literature online. So the University Health video will be accompanied by links to other websites with appropriate information.

“It gives people the freedom to choose how much they want to know about their procedure,” Cizman said.