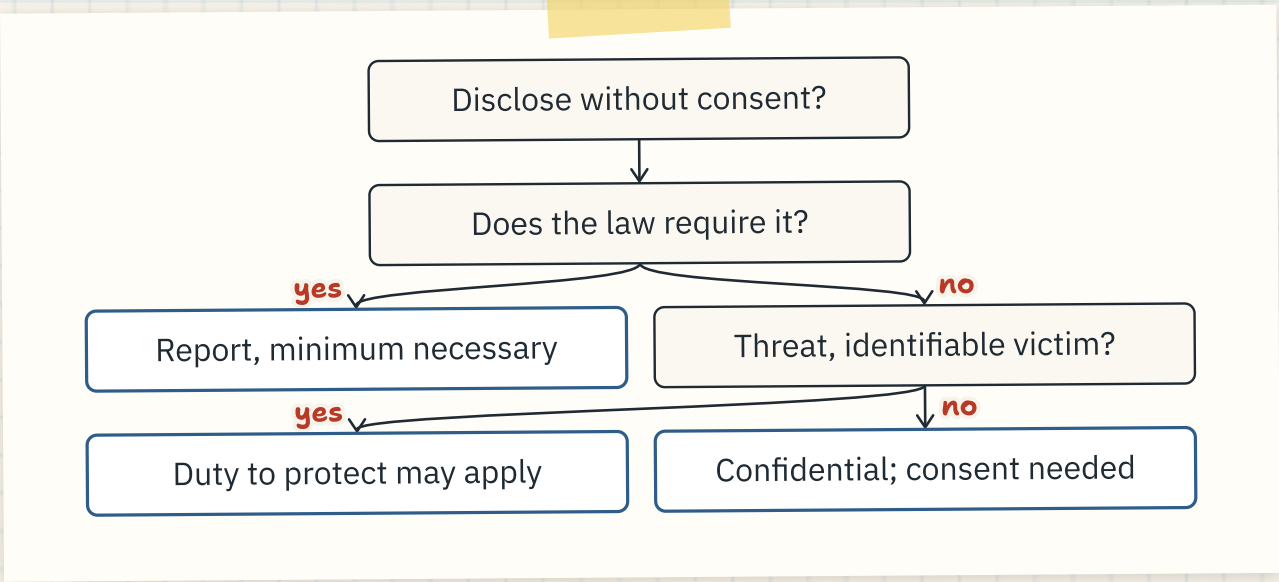
Confidentiality and its exceptions

When confidentiality may or must be broken (US)



Step by step

1. Default: confidential; patient decides
2. Does the law require a report?
3. Serious threat to an identifiable victim?
4. Share only the minimum necessary
5. Tell the patient when feasible

Situation	Action
Care team, for treatment	Share
Reportable disease (TB, syphilis)	Report to health dept
Suspected child abuse	Report; reasonable suspicion
Elder abuse, gunshot wound	Varies by state law
Serious threat, identifiable victim	Duty to protect (Tarasoff)
Employer, relative, colleague	Consent needed

Who gets told

Rule of thumb

Law requires it, or danger to others

Report TB to health dept, not employer or sister

Tarasoff: warn, notify police or protect

Exam traps

- Reporting needs reasonable suspicion, not proof.
- The patient's wish does not stop a required report.
- An anxious relative or employer is not an exception.

Confidentiality exceptions: when you may or must disclose

Video, written lesson, practice question and sources: medservatory.com/usmle-step-2-ck/ethics-law-patient-safety/confidentiality-and-its-exceptions-tarasoff-reportable-diseases-abuse

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