

**Viewing my**

**Electronic Medical Record**

**Patient Information Leaflet**



Introduction

There can be great benefits from accessing your electronic medical record online. But, your record contains personal and sometimes sensitive information, so it is important to keep them safe. You should take the same care with your health record as you do if you use online banking.

What is the minimum age to start using online services?

Patients can use online services from the age 16. If a patient is under 16 then their parent/guardian can apply for proxy access up until the patient turns 11 which will be assessed on a case by case basis. Access can be granted between the ages of 11 to 16 to request repeat medication only, unless agreed otherwise on a case by case basis with the practice. An example of this would be if a child has a severe learning disability and it would be in the child’s best interests for the parent/guardian to have access then this may be granted. (Please discuss this with the practice).

What’s in it for you?

* You can look at your records whenever you choose to, without needing to print them. Online records are up to date and more secure than a printed paper record which could get lost or seen by others.
* People who have long term conditions, for example diabetes, hypertension, coronary heart disease etc. have found looking at their test results online helps them to make positive changes to improve their health.
* You can look at your medical record before your appointment to see if there is anything you need to discuss with the clinician. This could be your test results, illnesses you have had in the past or any new information added to your records. This would help you discuss any concerns you may have and help you benefit more from your appointment.
* You can make sure your medical information is accurate, for example you can let the surgery know if you have an allergy to a medicine that is not recorded.
* Before you go on holiday you can check if your vaccinations are up to date without having to contact the surgery.

Share your records safely, or not at all

One of the benefits of using online records is that you can share them with family members or carers. However, sharing your record is something to think carefully about. Your record may contain sensitive and personal information that you don’t want other people to see. Another thing to consider is that anyone that you share your record with could keep a copy.

* Before you share your record with anyone, consider whether it’s in your best interests and what they might do with the information, now or in the future. If you are in doubt do not share.
* If someone is trying to force you to share your record, please tell us.

**Sharing Medical Records using Patient Access**

Sharing medical records using patient access is an easy way for you to quickly and securely give access to your temporary medical record. The shared record will be available for 24 hours via a unique link and secured using an access code. You can select the areas of your medical record which you want to share have the option to stop sharing access at any point.

Using Patient Access to share your medical record temporarily with family and friends or healthcare professionals may be beneficial as you can keep your family and friends informed, share medication and allergy histories with nursing homes and get the most efficient care in an emergency.

You can apply for this to be enabled by completing the Online Access application form.

*Note: This facility would not usually be enabled for Proxy users and if access to this facility is requested this would be considered on a case by case basis.*

Understanding your records

Your medical record is designed to be used by clinical professionals to ensure that you receive the best possible care. Some of the information within your medical record may be highly technical, written by specialists and not easily understood. If you find anything difficult to understand, as well as talking to the doctor or nurse you can go to the NHS Choices website, [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk). NHS Choices is the NHS website so you can look for information on illnesses, improving health and to find NHS services in your local area.

Test Results

Patients should note that data is quite often flagged as abnormal by the laboratory because the biological value is outside the lab ‘normal’ range but is no significance to the patient.

* Tests are carried out for different reasons and the meaning of the result may depend upon the circumstances of the test: diagnosis, monitoring, risk-stratification and screening. A result may be abnormal when used to make a diagnosis but acceptable for monitoring purposes, or vice versa.
* Reference intervals vary from laboratory to laboratory and may not allow for individual differences in age, gender and ethnicity. Generally 5% of the healthy population has a test that is outside the reference range.
* The predictive value of a test may vary depending upon the population. A test result may not distinguish between healthy people and those with disease. A false positive or false negative may be upsetting or inappropriately reassuring for the patient.
* Monitoring tests may vary with time quite normally therefore patients may find it difficult to decide whether a change in level is normal.
* Risk stratification is often based on several factors so for example two people with the same high total cholesterol may have very different cardiovascular risks.
* Screening tests are recommeneed on a set of criteria, including the predictive value of the test and the benefit of early recognition. Some tumor markers are useful in monitoring disease but not making a diagnosis.
* Free text added to test results may not be displayed in Patient Online, such free text often adds more meaning to the test result.

Other websites frequently used to search for information on illnesses and test results are Patient, [www.patient.info](http://www.patient.info) and Lab Tests Online UK, [www.labtestsonline.org.uk](http://www.labtestsonline.org.uk). Although these websites are not owned or checked by the NHS, patients do find them useful.

A few things to think about

There are a few things you need to think about before registering for online records.

* A suitably qualified member of the practice team will have checked the medical record that is available to the patient. Any potentially harmful and confidential third party data will have been redacted before you have been given access to the rest of the coded data within your medical record.
* The information that you can see online may be misleading if you rely on it alone to complete insurance, employment or legal report forms.

On very rare occasions:

* Your GP may not think it is in your best interest for you to look at your records online. If this happens, the GP will discuss their reasons with you. It is up to the GP to decide if you should be allowed access to your online records.
* You may see your test results before the clinician has spoken to you about them. This may be when you cannot contact the surgery, or when the surgery is closed. This means you will need to wait until an appointment is available to talk to a clinician.
* Information in your medical record may need correcting. If you find something that is not correct, you should contact the surgery. The staff will be able to answer your questions and set things right when needed. Please bear in mind that you cannot change the records yourself.
* There may be information in your medical record that you did not know was there or that you had forgotten about, such as an illness or an upsetting incident. If you see anything that you did not know about that worries you, please speak to the surgery and we will discuss this with you.
* If you see someone else’s information in your record, please log out immediately and let the surgery know as soon as possible.

Keeping your username and password safe

When you have registered for Patient Online services, the Practice will give you a username and password, which you will use to log in. You should not share your login details with others.

To protect your information from other people:

* You should keep your password secret and it is best not to write it down. If you must write it down, keep a reminder of the password, not the password itself. This should be kept in a secure place.
* If you think someone has seen your password, you should change it as soon as possible. You may want to contact the surgery if you are not able to change it right away, for example when you do not have access to the internet.
* You should not share your username or password. No one should force you to show them your login details, you have the right to say no. If someone forces you, tell the surgery as soon as possible

**The Practice has the right to remove online access services. This is rarely necessary but may be the best option if you do not use them responsibly or if there is evidence that access may be harmful to you. This may occur if someone is forcing you to given them access to your record of if the record may contain something that may be upsetting or harmful to you. The Practice will explain the reasons for withdrawing access to you and will re-instate access as quickly as possible if appropriate.**

Assessing GP Records Online – patient information leaflet

Practices are increasingly enabling patients to be able to book appointments and request repeat prescriptions online.

Some patients may wish to access more information online and contractually from 1st April 2015 practices are obliged to assist access to medications, allergies and adverse reactions as a minimum and from the 1st April 2016 coded data.

However this requires additional considerations as outlined in this leaflet. You will be asked that you have read and understood this leaflet before consenting and applying to access your records online. The practice will also need to verify your identity.

**Please note:**

* **It will be your responsibility to keep your login details and password safe and secure. If you know or suspect that your record has been accessed by someone that you have not agreed should see it, then you should change your password immediately.**
* **If you can’t do this for some reason, we recommend that you contact the practice so that we can remove online access until you are able to reset your password.**
* **If you print out any information from your record, it is also your responsibility to keep this secure. If you are at all worried about keeping printed copies safe, we recommend that you do not make copies at all.**
* **The practice may not be able to offer online access due to a number of reasons such as concerns that it could cause harm to physical or mental health or where there is reference to third parties. The practice has the right to remove online access to services for anyone that doesn’t use them responsibly.**

***More information***

For more information about keeping your healthcare records safe and secure, you will find a helpful leaflet produced by the NHS in conjunction with the British Computer Society: Keeping your online health and social care records safe and secure <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/thenhs/records/healthrecords/Documents/PatientGuidanceBooklet.pdf>

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| ***Key considerations*** |
| ***Forgotten history*** There may be something you have forgotten about in your record that you might find upsetting. |
| ***Abnormal results or bad news*** If your GP has given you access to test results or letters, you may see something that you find upsetting to you. This may occur before you have spoken to your doctor or while the surgery is closed and you cannot contact them.  |
| ***Choosing to share your information with someone*** It’s up to you whether or not you share your information with others – perhaps family members or carers. It’s your choice, but also your responsibility to keep the information safe and secure.  |
| ***Coercion*** If you think you may be pressured into revealing details from your patient record to someone else against your will, it is best that you do not register for access at this time. |
| ***Misunderstood information*** Your medical record is designed to be used by clinical professionals to ensure that you receive the best possible care. Some of the information within your medical record may be highly technical, written by specialists and not easily understood. If you require further clarification, please contact the surgery for a clearer explanation.  |
| ***Information about someone else*** If you spot something in the record that is not about you or notice any other errors, please log out of the system immediately and contact the practice as soon as possible. |