

# How The Royal Melbourne Hospital is protecting your privacy

## Summary Points to Remember

- We collect personal information so that we can provide you with the best possible treatment
- We comply with laws governing the collection, use and disclosure of patient information
- You have the right to refuse permission for your information to be disclosed to others
- Your medical record will usually be destroyed 15 years after your last visit
- You can gain access to your medical record via Freedom of Information

## What information does Melbourne Health collect about you?

Melbourne Health collects information such as your name, address and contact details, as well as information about your health problems and the treatment you are given. New information is added to your record every time you attend or have contact with Melbourne Health.

## Why do we collect your information and what do we use it for?

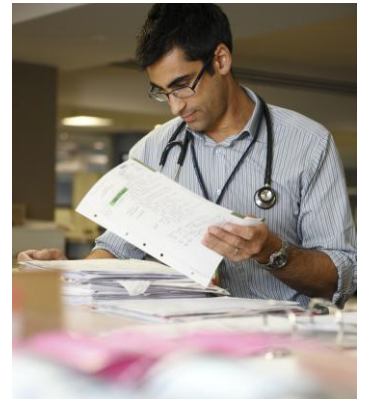
### Patient care

We collect and maintain personal and medical information in order to provide you with the best possible care and treatment. Your medical record enables all professionals involved in your care to have a complete picture of your medical history.

### Other Uses

- internal teaching and research purposes
- evaluating, planning and improving the health care services Melbourne Health provides

Where possible, information without your personal details is used for these purposes.



## How is your information protected?

Melbourne Health and its staff comply with privacy laws, policies and protocols relating to the collection, use, disclosure and storage of patient information. Only authorised personnel have access to your information.

## To whom might we disclose your information?

We may disclose your information to others outside Melbourne Health, including your own doctor and other health and care community support providers, if this is necessary for your further treatment (eg we usually send a letter to your GP). If you are an inpatient, we will tell your relatives and friends where you are and your general condition if they call or visit.

We will disclose your information to any person or organisation authorised by you. This will usually involve you signing a release document. Melbourne Health may also be obliged to release your information:

- where required by law (eg by Act of Parliament or in the case of a legal claim)
- where required by government authorities and departments (eg registration of births, deaths, diseases and treatments)

## Can you refuse to disclose your information?

Yes, you have the right to refuse permission for your information to be disclosed. You may exercise this right by completing a *Refusal of Consent to Disclosure and Use of Information* form.

However, refusing permission to disclose your information might inhibit you receiving appropriate care and treatment in the future. If you have any questions about refusing consent or completing the form, please speak with a staff member involved in your care.

## Who might contact you after you have been treated by Melbourne Health?

- A member of the health care team for follow up, including service evaluation
- A Melbourne Health researcher to invite you to participate in an important research project
- Our fundraising department, or its representatives, may send you information or contact you with a request for financial support. If you do not wish for this to happen, please contact The Royal Melbourne Hospital Foundation on 9342 7111 or via email to [info@rmhfoundation.org.au](mailto:info@rmhfoundation.org.au). Visit the website at [www.rmhfoundation.org.au](http://www.rmhfoundation.org.au).

## What if you are unable to give consent?

If you are unable to give permission for your information to be released, permission may be sought from your authorised representative. People who are permitted to act as an 'authorised representative' for a patient are specified by law. Your authorised representative may exercise the same rights as you in relation to withholding consent to the use or disclosure of, or making a request for access to, your information.

## How long do we keep information about you?

Medical records are usually destroyed 15 years after your last visit.

## How can you gain access to your information?

The Freedom of Information Act (FOI) gives you the right to access your medical record. Requests for access must be made in writing to the FOI Officer. The postal address is:

The FOI Officer  
PO Box 2155  
Melbourne Health  
The Royal Melbourne Hospital  
Parkville VIC 3050

A fee may be charged for this service.

Please note that a separate Melbourne Health *Freedom of Information and You* brochure is available. If you have any questions, phone: 9342 7781 or email: [FOI\\_request@mh.org.au](mailto:FOI_request@mh.org.au)

## Privacy contact number

This brochure is an outline of Melbourne Health's commitment to respecting and protecting your privacy. If you have any questions regarding what happens to information about you, please contact the Manager of Health Information Services, The Royal Melbourne Hospital on 9342 7357.

## If you have any concerns or questions about your care please contact:

If you have concerns regarding inappropriate use of your information by any Melbourne Health service, please contact our Consumer Liaison Officer on 9342 7806 or email: [consumerliaison@mh.org.au](mailto:consumerliaison@mh.org.au)

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