

How The Royal Melbourne Hospital is protecting your privacy



This document outlines:

- We collect personal information so that we can provide you with appropriate treatment
- We comply with laws governing the collection, use and disclosure of patient information
- You have the right to refuse disclosure of your information to providers outside the Parkville Precinct
- 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 (FOI)

What information does the Royal Melbourne Hospital collect about you?

The Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH) 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 the RMH.

How we collect and store information

We collect and maintain personal and medical information in order to provide you with appropriate care and treatment. The information we collect during your visits is stored securely in an electronic medical record (EMR) system.

This system is shared by the RMH, Royal Children's Hospital, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, and The Royal Women's Hospital

(collectively known as The Parkville Precinct). The EMR can be accessed by staff from all of these health services but only when they are directly involved with your care or treatment.

Visit thermh.org.au/emr to find out more about



The information in the EMR helps health care workers provide you with appropriate care

the EMR.

The shared EMR is hosted on the Royal Children's Hospital and Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre servers and this is where your data is physically held. The Royal Children's Hospital and Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre will therefore collect patient information from each health service to host, manage and support the shared EMR. The RMH and The Royal Women's Hospital will have access to collect and upload further information to the shared EMR in the course of treating their patients.

Information pertaining to your care prior to the implementation of the shared EMR will be stored across clinical information systems and paper medical records. All clinical information is stored securely by the RMH Health Information Services.

Staff at the RMH use the EMR to securely store and access patients' medical information



Other uses

We may also use your information for internal teaching or for research approved by our Human Research Ethics Committee.

Your information may also be used within the RMH for planning, evaluation and quality improvement. Reasonable steps are taken to remove details that identify you in any reports and publications.

Protecting patient privacy

The Parkville Precinct is committed to protecting privacy by keeping the information we collect about you secure from unauthorised access, use, disclosure or loss.

All paper and electronic systems across the Parkville Precinct are managed and maintained appropriately. There are strict privacy laws, policies and procedures that are in place to govern the collection, use, release and disposal of your information. Staff access to these systems is audited regularly by each health service to monitor compliance.

Parkville Connect

The Parkville Connect portal allows the sharing of certain information in the EMR with your nominated local doctor and their practice, and by other community health care providers you have consented to access your information.

This will provide quick access to your information and inform shared care between the hospital, your local doctor and other community health care providers.

Health Hub

The Health Hub portal allows patients and approved proxies to access some of their hospital information from the EMR.

This includes information about appointments, certain test results, some clinic notes and

correspondence from the Parkville Precinct. More information is available at health-hub.org.au

Who do we provide your health information to?

We may disclose your information to others outside the RMH, including your doctor and other health and care community support providers, if this is necessary for your further treatment. 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.

The RMH may also be obliged to release your information without your consent:

- 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)
- for mandatory reporting (eg reporting to Child Protection, child and family services or Victoria Police)
- when requested by Risk Assessment or Information Sharing Entities under the Victorian Government Family Violence and Child Information Sharing Schemes
- when there is a reasonable belief that there is a serious threat to an individual's health or safety or to the health and safety of others
- when this will reduce or prevent a serious threat to public health or safety
- for quality and safety purposes (as authorised by the Health Services Act 1988). This would be limited to entities responsible for investigating failures in quality and safety and for health system

quality and safety oversight. These departments include;

- the Victorian Department of Health
- Safer Care Victoria
- the Victorian Agency for Health Information
- and/or another health service entity

Any such sharing would be subject to and comply with existing data security and storage requirements set out in the Health Privacy Principles and Information Privacy Principles. The sharing and using of information is designed to address any quality and safety issues that may have affected you to ensure they inform continuous service improvement.

- The RMH is participating in the Australian Government My Health Record. Your discharge summaries and some pathology and radiology reports may be uploaded to your My Health Record, if you have one. Please tell us at the beginning of your visit if you do not want these clinical documents uploaded to your record. For more information go to myhealthrecord.gov.au or Help line 1800 723 471.

Can you refuse to disclose your information?

Yes, you have the right to refuse disclosure of your information to providers outside the Parkville Precinct. 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 affect you receiving appropriate care and treatment in the future. If you have any questions about disclosing your information, please speak with a staff member involved in your care.

There are some exceptions where the RMH may need to share your information without

you have seen the patient as a legal guardian or previous person.

- are the senior Next of Kin for a deceased person

Who might contact you after you have been treated by the RMH? Can records be released outside FOI?

- A member of your health care team for follow up, including service evaluation

The RMH research department may contact you with a request to participate in a research project (you may refuse or withdraw consent at any time without legal action before a court).

- Our fundraising department, or its representatives, may contact you for information about ways to support the hospital, such as making a financial gift to the RMH Health Care Foundation, or to the emergency department of the RMH Health Care Foundation, or to the dental care service.

Visit the website at thermh.org.au/foundation

How much does an FOI request cost? What if you are unable to give consent?

The cost involved will vary according to each request. Charges are updated annually and may include:

- application fee (non-refundable)
 - search fee (if applicable)
 - postage and handling
 - viewing and interpretation fee
- Your authorised representative may exercise

the right to access your records if the patient was a child when receiving treatment, whichever is the longest.

We may waive or reduce the application fee in some instances, e.g. financial hardship. Health Care Card and Pension Card holders.

Current fees and charges are viewable on the RMH FOI webpage thermh.org.au/FOI. For psychiatric inpatients and outpatients, records are kept for a minimum of 25 years, or longer if requested.

Radiology images are kept for a minimum of five years after use. At that time you may also receive an invoice for any applicable charges. Records of deceased patients are kept for 12 years from the date of death.

How can you gain access to your information?

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act gives you the right to access your medical record.

Requests for access must be made in writing to the FOI Office:

Mail:
Freedom of Information Officer
Health Information Services
The Royal Melbourne Hospital
PO BOX 2155 Parkville Victoria 3050

Email:
FOIrequest@rmh.org.au

Contact
The Royal Melbourne Hospital
Health Information Services
03 9342 7780

This brochure is an outline of The RMH Privacy Policy, and our commitment to respecting and protecting your privacy. If you have any questions about your information please contact us.

