

Amwell Street Surgery

YOUR MEDICAL RECORD INFORMATION



What you need to know

This leaflet explains why information is collected about you and the ways in which this information may be used

Why we collect information about you

Your doctor and other health professionals caring for you keep records about your health and any treatment and care you receive from the National Health Service. These help ensure that you receive the best possible care from us. They may be written down (manual records) or held on a computer. The records may include;

- Basic details about you e.g. your address and next of kin
- Contacts we have had with you e.g. visits to the surgery
- Notes and reports about your health, treatment and care you have received at the surgery and hospital etc.
- Results of investigations e.g. X-rays and laboratory tests
- Relevant information from other health professionals, or those who care for you and know you well

How your records are used to help you

Your records are used to guide professionals in the care you receive to ensure that;

- The healthcare professional involved in your care has accurate and up to date information to assess your health and decide what care you need
- Full information is available if you see another doctor or are referred to a specialist or another part of the NHS
- There is a good basis for assessing the quality and care you have received
- Your concerns can be properly investigated should you have any

How your records are used to help the NHS

Your information may also be used to help us to;

- Assess the needs of the general population
- Ensure our services can meet patient needs in the future
- Review the care we provide to ensure it is of a high standard
- Teach and train healthcare professionals
- Conduct health research and development
- Pay your GP, dentist and hospital for the care they provide
- Audit NHS accounts and services
- Prepare statistics on NHS performance
- Investigate complaints, legal claims or untoward incidents

Some of this information will be held centrally but where it is used for statistical purposes stringent measures are taken to ensure that individual patients cannot be identified. Anonymous information may be passed to organisations with legitimate interest e.g. universities, research institutions and community safety units.

Personally identifiable information may be used for essential NHS purposes e.g. research and auditing services. This will only be done with your consent, unless the law requires information to be passed on to improve public health.

How we keep your records confidential

Everyone working for the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential.

We may need to share some information about you if you are receiving care from another organisation as well as the NHS e.g. Social Services. This is to enable us to all work together for your benefit. We will only do this if the others involved in your care have a genuine need for it.

We will not disclose your information to a third party without your permission unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. when the health and safety of others is at risk or where the law requires information to be passed on.

Anyone who receives information from us is also under a legal duty to keep it confidential.

We are required by law to report certain information to the appropriate authorities. This is only provided after formal permission has been given by a qualified health professional. Occasions when we must pass on information include;

- Notification of new births
- Infectious diseases which may endanger the safety of others e.g. meningitis or measles (but not HIV/AIDS)
- Where a formal court order has been issued

Our guiding principle is that we are holding your records in strict confidence.

Who are our partner organisations

The principal partner organisations with whom information may be shared are;

- General Practitioners (GP's)
- NHS Trusts (Hospitals)
- Ambulance Services
- Health Authorities

Your information may also, subject to strict agreements describing how it will be used, be shared with;

- Social Services
- Education Services
- Local Authorities
- Voluntary Sector Providers
- Private Sector Providers
- NHS Common Services Agencies e.g. Primary Care Agencies

How you can get access to your own health records

The Data Protection Act 1998, which came into force on 1st March 2000, allows you to find out what information about you is held on computer and in certain manual records. This is known as "right of subject access" and applies to your health records.

If you want to see them you should make a written request to the NHS organisation where you are being or have been treated. You are entitled to receive a copy but should note that a charge will usually be made for this.

You should also be aware that in some circumstances your right to see some details in your health records may be limited in your own interest or for other reasons.

What to do if you do not want your information shared

If you decide that you do not want your information used in any of the ways used in this leaflet please put your request in writing to the Practice Manager at the surgery. On receipt of your request you will be sent some further information regarding the consequences of this decision and an application form to be removed from the NHS Summary Care Record, which you will need to complete and return.

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