

HEALTH INFORMATION/PRIVACY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Your personal health record

- Your personal health records are confidential documents that include information collected by the Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre during your stays and visits at our hospital.
- As a patient you have the following rights:
 - ✓ Privacy and confidentiality of your personal health information with limited and specific exceptions
 - ✓ Access to your personal health information
 - ✓ The ability to request a correction of incomplete or inaccurate information in your health record
 - ✓ Access to a copy of viewing of your health record upon request
 - ✓ Health care providers who are involved in treating you can also request a copy of your health record to continue your care (providers within the circle of care).

Will the hospital have all of my records on file?

- According to law we are required to keep your patient records for 10 years from the last visit to the hospital or 10 years after a child's 18th birthday.
- As we are on a shared electronic medical record, your other hospital's records are accessible to our providers for your care, however we do not release any information from other facility's records through our Health Records Department.

Can the hospital or health records staff release my information over the phone or by email?

- We do not release any information over the phone with the exception of (unless the patient specifically requests otherwise):
 - ✓ Confirmation that an individual is a patient or resident;
 - ✓ The individual's general health status
 - ✓ The location of the individual in the facility.
- We do not send any personal information by email as this is not a secure method of information transfer.

Can I have my records released to someone else?

- If you chose to release your records to anybody who is not considered to be a provider in your circle of care, you would be required to provide a signed release of information that is specific as to what information should be released and the consent dated and witnessed.

What if I am a Power of Attorney for healthcare for somebody, can I consent to access their records?

- A POA for personal care is only considered valid when the individual is deemed incapable of consenting. In some cases Health Records may need to contact the patient's family doctor or request that a capacity assessment be completed before releasing health information.
- As long as the patient is mentally capable they can continue to make their own health care decisions.

Is there an age of consent where children can start to make decisions about their own health information?

- No. Just like consenting to treatment, there is no magic age in Ontario in which a child automatically starts to make his or her own health information decisions. A child may make information decisions if he or she is “capable”.
- First, all patients are presumed to be capable of making health information decisions, unless it is not reasonable to presume capacity. For example, babies are never capable of making health information decisions. Very young children are rarely able to make their own health information decisions. But as children age, they may become more capable of making their own choices about their own health information.
- If there is a conflict between the child and the parent, the capable child’s decision prevails with respect to consent
- See the chart below:

Person of any age	If capable	Can make decisions about release of everything in his/her own health record
Person of any age	If incapable	Needs a substitute decision-maker to release anything in health record
Under age of 16 (birth to 16 less a day)	If capable	Can make decisions about release of everything in his/her own health record AND A parent can also consent to release of information about any treatment or counseling that child did not consent to on his/her own BUT NOT IF THE CAPABLE CHILD OBJECTS TO PARENT MAKING SUCH DECISIONS

Can my friends and family reach me while I am in the hospital?

- Yes your family and friends may call and request information on your location in the hospital, your general health status and that you are a patient here. If you do not want this information given out, please inform the registration staff upon registration.

What is a privacy breach?

- A breach of privacy, confidentiality or security refers to the unauthorized access, collection, use, or disclosure of any personal information or personal health information. We have policies and procedures to address any breaches that may occur. If you think that your information has been breached please contact the privacy officer at 705-869-1420 ext. 3108

If I request my information can I have somebody pick it up for me?

- No, upon the pick up of your request we do require proof of identity, a signed consent, as well as any payment.

My daughter and friend work at the hospital can they just get the information that I need as they do have access to the information?

- No, all release of information must follow our policy and procedures and come from the Health Records Department.

How does an individual correct errors to their hospital records if they believe that is inaccurate?

- If an individual is seeking to correct his/her personal health information can submit a request to the Health Records Department.
- The hospital is obligated to correct personal health information where an individual demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the hospital, that the record is in fact inaccurate or incomplete and the individual gives the custodian the necessary information to correct the record.
- The hospital, however, may refuse to correct personal health information that is a professional opinion or an observation of the health care provider.

Is my personal health information protected? Can any hospital employee have access?

- The Espanola Regional Hospital & Health Centre's privacy policy governs the way in which all hospital employees manage and access patient information. In addition, all hospital employees must sign a confidentiality agreement as a condition of their employment.
- There are a number of physical safeguards and measures to protect patient records including facility access controls, workstation security as well as mobile device security requirements.
- Our information technology department upgrades the security of data on an ongoing basis. They have implemented role based access controls ensuring that staff only have access on a need-to-know basis.
- We conduct regular privacy audits on our data.

How do I get a copy of my xray films/pictures/images?

- The Health Records Department does not have access to the images taken during your xray/ultrasound, only the interpretation reports. The Diagnostic Imaging Department no longer provides CD/DVDs.
- We are now affiliated with a third party agent called "Pocket Health" who can give you access to all of your images from hospitals in our area.
- To access the direct link please see our Diagnostic Imaging page on our website.

How long will it take to get my records once requested?

- Once your request is made and complete, we would strive to complete the task as soon as possible but as per PHIPA it will be available within 30 days.

How do I request copies of a deceased patient's records?

- A request can be made to the Health Records Department from the Executor of the Estate or the appointed Estate Trustee.
- The hospital does not issue any death certificates. A medical Certificate of Death is completed by the hospital and sent to the funeral home with the deceased.
- A statement of death is completed at the funeral home, and the death is registered with the Office of the Registrar General. Phone 1-800-461-2156 <http://www.mgs.gov.on.ca/en/Contact/index.htm> or your local Service Ontario.

Where can I learn more about the Personal Health Information Protection Act?

- Health Information Protection Act – PHIPA. <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/04p03>

Where can I learn more about FIPPA?

- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act – FIPPA. <https://www.ontario.ca/document/freedom-information-and-protection-privacy-manual>

If I have any questions or complaints or in need of oversight as to Ontario’s laws that establish rules for the way that institutions may collect, use and disclose your personal information or to make complaints about privacy

- Information Privacy Commissioner IPC. 1-800-387-0073 <https://www.ipc.on.ca>