

we will release information about you to facilitate your immediate care. General information about your condition may also be provided to your next of kin or a near relative, unless you request otherwise.

We may also provide your information to third parties involved in your care who will treat your information in accordance with this document and other legal requirements, and selected information such as discharge summaries, and certain pathology and radiology results may be released to the national My Health Record if you have one. Apart from what is described in this brochure, no personal identifiable information will be released without your prior consent.

Do I need to provide my information?

Not providing or sharing your information may inhibit the care and treatment you receive. If you have any questions or concerns about how we will use and secure your personal information, please speak with a staff member involved in your care or the RCH Privacy Officer.

How can I access my information?

My RCH Portal allows patients and approved proxies to access some of your hospital information in the EMR. This includes information about appointments, certain test results, clinic notes and correspondence from The Parkville Precinct. More information is available at www.rch.org.au/my-rch-portal/.

The Freedom of Information Act 1982 sets out your right to access your medical record and personal information held by the RCH. If you would like to access information collected about your care, ask a staff member or contact the RCH Freedom of Information (FOI) Officer on 9345 5156. The request process may require you to complete an application and to pay a fee.

If you identify information that is incorrect, or you do not agree with, you have a right to request that it be amended. Speak with a staff member or the FOI Officer who will arrange this for you.

Staff in your health care team are the best source of information about your care and treatment. Speak to a staff member if you have any questions about your care.

Need more information?

If you have questions about the privacy of your personal information, please contact the RCH Privacy Officer during business hours via the hospital switchboard on 9345 5522.

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The privacy of your personal information

For patients and families

What information is collected and why?

Information is collected during your (or your child's) visit to The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) to help provide the very best care. For example, age, symptoms, previous illness or medication may all play a role in patient care and will be collected by hospital staff. Information is also collected to administer and manage the provision of health care services, including charging, billing and collecting debts.

Other information collected and stored includes name, address, religion, main language spoken and details of your local doctor or other community health care providers. It is important that you provide us with as much information as possible to support your care.

Each time you attend hospital, information about you will be updated. You can choose to allow your local doctor and nominated community health care providers to receive and access information to support your ongoing care. Your local pharmacist can also be provided with an encrypted electronic prescription.

We aim to keep your information accurate and up-to-date at all times to make sure the best possible care and service can be provided. Please let a staff member know or contact us when your details, such as address, local doctor, or community health care providers change.

The information we collect during your visits is stored securely in an electronic medical record (EMR) system. This system is shared by The RCH, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, The Royal Melbourne Hospital and The Royal Women's Hospital (The Parkville Precinct).

The shared EMR can be accessed by staff from all of these health services but only when they are directly involved in your care or treatment. Go to www.rch.org.au/emr/ to find out more about the EMR.

The shared EMR is hosted on RCH and Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre servers and this is where your data is physically held. RCH and Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre will therefore collect patient information from each health service to host, manage and support the shared EMR. The Royal Melbourne Hospital 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 RCH Health Information Services.

Protecting your privacy

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

All paper and electronic systems across The Parkville Precinct are managed and maintained appropriately. There are strict 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.

How is information used?

Your information is primarily used by those involved in your care and treatment. Sometimes it may be used by other staff members to offer additional support services, for example, information about your religion may be used to offer pastoral care and Chaplaincy services.

We may disclose your information to organisations that provide services on our behalf. We take reasonable steps to ensure that these organisations are bound by privacy and confidentiality obligations when handling your personal information.

We may use your contact details to ask you to join a research project or complete a hospital survey.

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

We may also use your information for research approved by our Human Research Ethics Committee. The committee evaluates each research project in accordance with National Health and Medical Research Council policies and protects the privacy of individuals participating.

What happens to information?

Certain information relating to your hospital visit may be forwarded to the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services. This information is summarised and does not identify you. Rather than being used for personal treatment and care, the information is used for funding, planning and improving health care quality.

In some circumstances the RCH is required by law to release information. Some details about people who have specific conditions (for example, some infectious diseases and types of cancer) must be reported to databases or registers maintained securely by the Department of Health and Human Services or other health care bodies.

We may also be required to give information to bodies such as Child Protection or Victoria Police to assist with investigations. Information may also be provided to a court or tribunal when subpoenaed.

Information can also be provided to your local doctor and other community health care providers you nominate to be kept informed of your care at the hospital. Once discharged from hospital, or after an emergency or outpatient visit, we normally write a letter, fax or electronically transfer information to your doctor. This information provides your doctor with a summary of your admission or visit to hospital, your medication requirements and any special instructions that the doctor may need to be aware of as part of your ongoing care.

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.

Other hospitals or new doctors that you visit may contact the RCH to obtain information so they provide you with the best possible care and treatment. We would ask for written authorisation before releasing any information to them or provide them with electronic access. In an emergency situation however,