

Access to your health information

You may ask to see the health information we have about you. In certain instances, we do have the right to refuse your request. If this happens we will tell you why. If there is a cost to seeing your information we will let you know.

Your request to see your personal information must be put in writing and given to the Freedom of Information Service.

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Service is able to help you if you:

- want to see your health information; or
- want to request a change to your health information.

The service can be contacted by phone on (03) 9871 3170 or email at foi@easternhealth.org.au

More information on FOI can be seen on the Eastern Health web site.

Keeping in touch

To help us improve our services, we may phone you or send you a survey. We appreciate knowing your opinion about Eastern Health. Telling us your opinion is completely voluntary. You can provide your opinion without giving your name.

We may also ask for your support when conducting fundraising activities. Sometimes we use external agencies to mail these letters and so we need to give them the names and addresses of our patients.

These agencies are required to keep this information confidential.

You have the right to agree or refuse Eastern Health contacts you once you go home. If you do not want to be contacted, please tell us in writing by filling in the *Refusal to Release Information* form available from staff.

Complaints

If you have a complaint about how Eastern Health managed your privacy, please let us know. You can speak with a health professional or you can call one of our Patient Relations Advisors on 1800 EASTERN (1800 327 8376).

Eastern Health is accredited by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards.

If you have any English language difficulties, please ask staff to book an interpreter.

From home, you can contact us directly by using the Telephone Interpreter Service 9605 3056. Interpreter services are provided free of charge. Ask staff to check if this information is available in your preferred language.



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www.easternhealth.org.au

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PROTECTING YOUR PRIVACY Information for Patients

Maintaining your privacy and the confidentiality of your information is important to us at Eastern Health

We comply with all Victorian legislation relating to confidentiality and privacy, including the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic), the Health Services Act 1988 (Vic), and the Mental Health Act 2014 (Vic).

We have policies about how we manage your information and the process you need to follow to see your information.

Your information

We only collect the information that we need to give good healthcare and for related administrative activities e.g. billing accounts. We do this in a fair, lawful and sensitive way. Wherever we can, we collect information directly from you, rather than another person. However, there are times when we may need to collect information about you from another person.

At any time, you can tell us if you do not want us to share your health information with other people helping you with your healthcare. If you have registered with the National eHealth record system (My Health Record) please let us know if you do not want your Eastern Health information to go into your 'My Health Record'.

We respect your right to request that your information not be disclosed to others or not be placed into your 'My Health Record'. If this is your wish, please fill in a *Refusal to Release Information* form. An Eastern Health staff member can give you this form.

How your information is used

Staff members caring for you need to use your information to provide your care. If you need care outside Eastern Health, some information may be given to other health care providers.

Eastern Health may send health information, such as x-ray reports, test results or the specialist's opinion to your general practitioner or the doctor who referred you. If you do not want this to happen please let us know.

However, providing your healthcare provider with all your relevant health information will help them to manage your care.

We may use some information about you for other reasons permitted under privacy laws, e.g. to evaluate treatment and services or to assist with service planning.

Your information may be used for health-related research. The Eastern Health Human Research Ethics Committee, which is responsible for approving research projects, carefully investigates all research proposals.

Researchers must follow strict confidentiality guidelines and no personal or identifiable information can be used for research without your agreement.

In certain circumstances, by law, Eastern Health must pass on some personal information to organisations such as the Department of Health and Human Services and Courts of Law.

Accuracy and security of your information

We take all reasonable steps to make sure that the information we hold about you is accurate, complete and up to date. It is important that you provide complete and accurate information to ensure staff members have all the information needed to provide your care. Please tell staff of any changes to your information as soon as possible.

Access to patient records and computer systems is controlled and monitored. Staff and authorised external users can only access the systems they need to see the health information they need to provide care.