

# Your guide to accessing GP services and medical records online

## From April 2016, patients have far greater online access to their GP

You can book an appointment, check test results, and see the diagnosis and treatment details in your GP medical record. You may also be able to send secure messages to your GP. This guide will help make sense of your medical record and answer questions you may have.

### You can now...



**Book an appointment to see your GP:** Most surgeries now let you book, view, amend and cancel appointments online.



**Request a repeat prescription:** Most GPs now allow patients to request a repeat prescription online.



**Get test results:** Many test results are now available online. GPs may still request a face-to-face or telephone appointment to discuss some results.

### View a detailed version of your medical records, including:

**Demographic details:** Your name, address, date of birth.

**Appointment details:** The GP you saw; appointment date; reason for the visit; history; examination and outcome.

**Problems/diagnoses:** Details of your medical conditions.

**Allergies and adverse reactions to medication:** For example, you may have previously reacted badly to penicillin.

**Medication:** The dose, quantity, and when medication was last issued.

**Immunisations:** Influenza or tetanus, for example.

**Values:** Blood pressure readings, for example.

**Procedure details:** Medical or surgical information, and codes in consultation (signs, symptoms).

**Links:** Links to information about your treatment or diagnosis.

**Letters and attachments:** A note that your GP has communicated with another clinician, for example, a hospital consultant. The letter itself may not be included.

### What you can't see and why

A GP may believe it is not in the best interests of a patient to see all the information in their medical record. GPs can withhold "free text" notes and administrative information.

## Patients' top questions



### How do I access online services with my GP surgery?

Speak to reception at your GP surgery about registering to use online services. They will explain the options, including logging in securely via a website or using a smartphone app, such as Patient Access.

You will be given an information leaflet and asked to complete a registration form and questionnaire. Once appropriate checks are completed, you will be registered for online access and given a username and unique password.



### Are my records secure?

The clinical software systems used to store patient medical records are designed to be secure. It's important to choose a strong password and keep it secret.

Keep your device (smartphone, iPad or desktop) secure too and log out after viewing your record.

Before sharing your record with anyone, consider whether it's in your best interests and how that information might be used.



### Who can see my medical records?

Your health records are confidential and can only be seen by a healthcare professional on a need-to-know basis. You can allow other people to see your health records, for example, a pharmacist.



### What can I do if my GP refuses access to my medical record?

A refusal to grant medical records access can be challenged through an official complaint to the NHS Trust or social services department concerned or via the Information Commissioner's Office (**01625 54 57 45**).



### Understanding your records

Your records are written to help medical people look after you and so sometimes you may not understand everything you see. If you find anything difficult to understand, as well as talking to your doctor or nurse, you can go to **www.patient.info** or the NHS Choices website.

NHS Choices has more information about **accessing medical records**.

If your doctor doesn't use Patient Access, the NHS Choices website has details for patients at surgeries that use **other clinical software systems**.

