

Will anyone else receive information about me?

In some circumstances, laws obligate us to release personal information about you.

Examples of this include:

- Presentation of your medical record as evidence in court, requested through a subpoena
- Compulsory reporting to state and federal authorities

We may use or disclose patient information for other purposes required for the operation of the organisation, including safety and quality improvement initiatives (patient satisfaction survey) and billing.

For example, where relevant, we may need to disclose patient information to Medicare, private health funds, accreditation organisations or the Department of Veteran Affairs.

How can I access my information?

You have the right to make a written application for access to your medical record and personal information held by the Mater Hospital. A small administration and copying fee may be charged.

If there is information in the record that you believe is incorrect, you have the right to request that it be corrected. Please contact the Health Information Services Department on (02) 9900 7486.

Under the legislation, in special circumstances, access to your personal information may be declined (for example, where giving access would put you or another person at risk of harm).

What should I do if I have a complaint about the privacy of my health information?

If you have any questions regarding what happens to the information about you, please speak to the Health Information Manager on (02) 9900 7486.

FUNDRAISING

With the generous support of donors, Mater Hospital can continue to provide much needed services to the community. We only contact patients with their consent and our fundraising staff do not have access to your health information.

RESEARCH

One of your treating health professionals may write to you about a research study that you may be eligible to join. You can choose if you would like to be involved.

This information may also be used for research that will help provide better healthcare for the community. The St Vincents Health Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) only approves application for research after undertaking thorough investigation and review. Researchers must follow strict guidelines and maintain the confidentiality of the information they access. No personal, identifiable information will leave the organisation for research without your prior consent.

If you wish to discuss any privacy matters please contact the Health Information Manager on (02) 9900 7486.

For further information or to download our complete Private Policy go to www.mns.org.au/privacy.

What information does the Mater Hospital collect about me?

When you become a patient of the Mater Hospital, a record is made, both hard copy and electronic, containing information such as your name, address, date of birth, emergency contacts, GP contact details, the nature of the problems for which you seek treatment, investigations, treatment and advice you were given and other information relevant to your care. In some instances, it may be necessary to collect information about you from your next of kin, relatives or carers. Every time you attend the hospital, new information is added to your record. Please let admission staff know if your contact details or your local doctor's contact details have changed since your last admission.

Why is information collected?

The Mater Hospital only collects information that is needed to ensure the best possible care and to manage the Health Service effectively. Your previous medical history will help us to identify which treatments are likely to be safe and effective for you and also to help reduce the likelihood of repeating tests that you have had in the past. To help look after your own health we ask that you provide us with accurate and complete information. If you do not want the Mater Hospital to collect information about you, you will need to tell us and we can explain any consequences of your decision for your health care.

The Mater Hospital is a values-based organisation and is committed to upholding the principles of the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (HRIP Act) which protects the privacy of health information in New South Wales.

How is my information protected?

We record and update information about you in both hard copy and electronic form. When not required for your clinical care, your hard copy medical record is kept securely within our Health Information Services Department or off-site storage facility.

Information about you is also located within the organisation's password-protected computer system and is available to healthcare professionals who are involved in your care.

We maintain strict policies regarding who has the authority to access your personal information. All our staff are bound by a formal code of conduct about the confidentiality of your information.

We educate and monitor staff to ensure information is handled confidentially and with respect and care.

Who else might have access to information about me?

To help coordination of your clinical care, reduce the need to repeat tests and other clinical assessments, and to reduce the need for you to give the same information again to other people involved in your care, if you attend another facility within St Vincents Health Australia (SVHA), relevant information about you may be made available to healthcare professionals at that facility.

The Mater Hospital works closely with St Vincent's Private Hospital, St Vincent's Public Hospital in Darlinghurst and SVHA hospitals in Victoria. These health services are facilities of St Vincent's Health Australia.

We may also provide your health information to other practitioners who form part of the treating team involved in your care. If you do not want us to provide your health information for this purpose, you will need to discuss this with your primary treating clinician at or soon after your admission.

Who might receive information regarding my care and treatment?

Your local doctor (GP)

We send a letter to your local doctor or referring hospital when you go home after an admission. The letter summarises your time at the Mater Hospital, your medication and any special instructions your doctor needs to know.

Sometimes your local doctor will contact the hospital for additional information about your treatment. In this situation, we will only release information to the doctor whom you have specified as your local doctor on your patient admission form.

Other hospitals or new doctors

Another hospital or a new local doctor may contact us to obtain information about you, so that they can treat you safely and effectively. We will release personal information about you to assist with your care after confirmation of the identity and purpose of the request with the person requesting your health information.

Your Private Health Fund

We will contact the Health Fund that you have nominated to confirm your membership and level of cover and any costs associated with expected treatments or procedures. We will then be able to advise you of any 'out of pocket' expenses and any 'exclusions' that may be attached to your policy.

Community Health and Support Services

You may need support services when you go home. We will release relevant information to enable these services to provide their support and continue your care.

Relatives, next of kin and/or significant other(s)

General information about your condition may also be provided to your next of kin, or other relatives as approved by you on your admission forms.

