


The ROYAL MARSDEN
NHS Foundation Trust



Your health
information, your
confidentiality



Patient Information



NHS

What information do you keep in my health care records?

During your visit or stay at The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust we will ask you for information about yourself. We keep information about you so we can care for you safely and effectively.

The information will be kept on a computer or paper record (or both). The Royal Marsden has its own electronic patient information system which provides a greater degree of security than paper records. Only those involved directly in your care, which includes diagnosis and treatment, and the quality of healthcare provided are allowed access to your information.

How do you use my health information?

The people caring for you use your information to

- provide treatment
- check the quality of your care
- help you make good decisions about your health
- investigate complaints

They will share relevant information with other staff involved in your care or those checking its quality (unless you have asked that we limit how we share your record). This makes caring for you safer, easier and faster. We may need to share information about you with other people

involved in your care, such as your GP, dentist, health visitor, community nurse or social worker.

For example, information is shared if:

- your GP refers you to a hospital
- you are moved from one hospital to another
- you need support at home

How else does The Royal Marsden use information about my health?

- to find out how many people have a particular illness or disease
- to look at how safe and effective a treatment is
- to check that The Royal Marsden is providing a good service
- to plan how many beds, wards and staff are needed
- to train students and staff
- to check that The Royal Marsden spends public money properly
- for research
- ethnic monitoring
- help investigate any concerns or complaints you or your family have about your healthcare

If we use your information for these reasons, we normally remove your name and other details which could identify you. Sometimes The Royal Marsden uses

information that does identify you. If we do this, we will usually explain how and why your information will be used. If we want to use information that identifies you for teaching or research, we will ask your permission first. For instance, some research may consider information about named persons and the findings could contribute to their future care.

When can my personal health information be shared outside The Royal Marsden?

Your personal health information may be given to other people who need to know relevant information about your health – for example a carer or a social worker. If you don't agree, we will discuss with you the possible effect this may have on your care and alternatives available to you.

We will generally not share health information that identifies you (particularly with other government agencies) for any reason other than providing your care, unless:

- you have agreed, and the information is necessary to be able to give you care and treatment.
- we are required to do so by law

When might you use information that identifies me without asking my permission?

Sometimes the law requires The Royal Marsden to share your

personal health information without your permission, for example, to investigate a serious crime or to protect a child.

Some important health research involves thousands of patients. In these cases, contacting every patient for their permission may not be practical.

In all cases, we will only provide the information needed. Wherever possible, we will tell you. For example, we may need to:

- report some infectious diseases
- provide information to be used in court
- give information to the police to help detect or prevent a crime.

Usually The Royal Marsden will not share your personal health information with people such as a relative, carer or friend without your permission. However, there are exceptions:

- If you are a child, and your doctor doesn't think you can make decisions about your health care, someone with parental responsibility for you may be allowed to see your records and discuss your care.
- If you are an adult who cannot make decisions for yourself, or cannot tell others your decisions, the law allows someone to see your records and discuss your care, if:
 - you have given them a lasting power of attorney, or
 - a court has given them a guardianship
- In these cases, the person allowed to

see your health information:

- will only be able to see information that is necessary for them to make particular decisions for you about your health care
- will not receive information that staff feel would be harmful to your health or the health of others

Anyone who receives information from us is also under a legal duty to keep it confidential.

If at any time you would like to know more about how we use your personal information you can contact

The Royal Marsden Help Centre on
0800 783 7176.

Your right to object to your information being shared outside the Trust

If you don't want your health information to be used or shared, tell a member of staff providing your care. If you do this, The Royal Marsden has to limit how it uses your information where possible.

Sharing information with family and friends

It is important that we know, with which family members or friends we may share information about you. You can choose one of these as your next-of-kin. When you first attend the hospital and register, we will ask you for the name and contact details of your next-of-kin. This person

does not need to be related to you but should be able to reflect your wishes at all times, even if you were unable to do so yourself.

Five things that you can do in return

- Help us to make sure that we have identified you correctly by letting us know when you change address or name and keeping a note of your unique NHS number.
- Tell us if any information in your record is wrong.
- Allow us to share as much information about you as we need to provide you with healthcare.
- If you have decided to limit how we share the information, tell us if you change your mind. We will always try to provide you with the best possible care, but bear in mind that limiting the information we can share may make it more difficult.
- Only let others – insurers, mortgage lenders, employers, solicitors – look at your records if you are sure it is necessary for your purposes. Think carefully about who you give permission to and why. Try to restrict their access to what they need to know and no more.

How and where is my personal health information kept?

It is kept in records. Records can be written on paper, held on computer or both. Records are stored securely at all

times. The Royal Marsden has a duty to maintain full and accurate records of the care we provide.

How does The Royal Marsden keep my personal health information confidential?

You have the right to expect us to keep your health information private. You also have rights to make sure we keep your details confidential under the Data Protection Act, Human rights legislation and the common law.

- All staff at The Royal Marsden have a professional, ethical and legal duty to keep information about you confidential, secure and accurate and to abide by the NHS Confidentiality Code of Practice.
- The Royal Marsden stores your personal health information securely.
- Only relevant information is shared inside the NHS or with outside organisations.
- The Royal Marsden will not give information about you to organisations such as benefits agencies, employers or the media without your permission.

We will make sure, through contract terms and staff training, that everyone who works in or on behalf of The Royal Marsden understands their duty of confidentiality, what it means in practice and how it applies to all parts of their work.

The Royal Marsden is committed to data protection and we take great care to ensure that your data is looked after properly. Your information will be stored securely. Only staff who are involved in your care will be able to look at your record. If we find that someone has deliberately accessed records about you without permission or good reason, we will take action which may include disciplinary action.

We ask you for information about yourself so that you can receive proper care and treatment. We will use records about you in ways that respect your rights and promote your health and wellbeing. We will aim to share only as much information as people need to know to play their part in your healthcare.

If you have any questions about the information given or references used in writing this booklet, please call

The Royal Marsden Help Centre on

Freephone: 0800 783 7176 or

Email: patientcentre@rmh.nhs.uk

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