



Your Emergency Care Summary

What does it mean for you?



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What is this leaflet about?

- It is the first in a series of leaflets to let you know about changes in the way we in the NHS store your health records.
- It tells you about something new - the Emergency Care Summary - which all patients in Scotland will soon have, and the benefits this will bring.
- It explains how, in the future, all your health records will be stored and linked electronically, and why that will be good for your healthcare.

It's happening now

All patients in Scotland have, or will soon have, something called an Emergency Care Summary.

What is an Emergency Care Summary?

This is a summary of basic information about your health which might be important if you need urgent medical care when your GP surgery is closed, or when you go to an accident and emergency department. It means that all NHS staff looking after you can get important information about your health, even if they are unable to contact your GP surgery.



Your Emergency Care Summary contains the following information:

- your name
- your date of birth
- the name of your GP surgery
- an identifying number called a CHI number (there is more about the CHI number later)
- information about any medicines prescribed by your GP surgery, and
- any bad reactions you've had to medicines that your GP knows about.

Your Emergency Care Summary is copied from your GP's computer system and stored electronically. It can then be found quickly by NHS staff if they need to see it.

Who can look at my Emergency Care Summary?

- NHS staff can look at your Emergency Care Summary on computer if they need to treat you when your GP surgery is closed. They must ask you if you agree to this before they look at your information.
- If you agree, only the staff listed here will be able to look at your Emergency Care Summary.
 - Doctors, nurses and receptionists in out-of-hours medical centres.
 - Staff at NHS 24 who are involved in your care.
 - Staff in hospital accident and emergency departments.
- In the future, ambulance staff may also be able to look at your Emergency Care Summary.
- If you are unconscious, NHS staff may look at your Emergency Care Summary without your agreement. This is so they can give you the best possible care.

How do I know that the information in my Emergency Care Summary is secure?

- The NHS stores your Emergency Care Summary electronically using the highest standards of security.
- Only NHS staff directly involved in your medical care will be allowed to look at your Emergency Care Summary.
- NHS staff can only look at your Emergency Care Summary if they have a password that allows them to.
- A record will be kept of everyone who has looked at your Emergency Care Summary.
- Your GP surgery will be able to check who has looked at your record if you want them to.

What if I'm not sure that I want an Emergency Care Summary?

- If you don't want an Emergency Care Summary to be made for you, tell your GP surgery.
- Don't forget that if you do have an Emergency Care Summary, you will be asked if staff can look at it every time they need to. You don't have to agree to this.

Can I see my Emergency Care Summary?

- If you would like to see your Emergency Care Summary, ask your GP to print it out for you to have a look at.
- If you think anything is wrong, ask for it to be changed.

What does the future hold?

In the future, all patients in Scotland will have an electronic health record. The rest of this leaflet explains why this is important for providing the best possible care in the NHS.

What is an electronic health record?

- It is any information about your health and health care which is stored electronically.
- We will use an identifying number called the Community Health Index number (CHI for short) to link up the different parts of your health record held in different places within the NHS.

How are my records stored at the moment?

- Most of your health information is recorded on paper files that are kept in different places. For example, you will have one set of records at your GP surgery, and another set at any hospital you have been to.
- GPs and hospitals store some records electronically, but the different computers they use are not linked up. So when you go to a hospital, staff there cannot look at the health record held in your GP surgery.



What are the benefits of electronic health records?

- NHS staff will be able to find medical information about you much more quickly.
- Staff treating you will have a more complete picture of your health and your medical background. For example, we will be able to see quickly if you have any long term medical conditions, or if you have recently had an operation.
- This information will be available even when you are not at home – for example if you are in another part of Scotland.
- It will be easier for you to look at your own health records, for example if you want to check that they are correct.

How soon will I have an electronic health record?

- We are already storing some records electronically, but it will take some time before all your health records are held electronically.
- It will also take quite a long time before we are able to link all your records, using the CHI number.
- Most test results are now stored on computer. This means your GP gets the result more quickly, without having to wait for a letter.
- Letters about your care and treatment are often sent electronically between NHS staff and stored on computer. This may happen, for example, if your GP refers you to hospital, or if you are discharged from hospital.

Need more information?

- A special telephone helpline is available until 30 September 2006 to give you more information about anything in this leaflet. Phone this helpline on **0800 85 85 31**. The helpline is available from 11am - 7pm.
- For information about your emergency care summary or electronic health records from 1 October 2006, phone the NHS Helpline on **0800 22 44 88**.
- If you want to find out more about your health records and how you can see what's in them, ask for the leaflets '*How to see your health records*' and '*Confidentiality – it's your right*'. You can get these leaflets from:
 - GP surgeries, dental surgeries, hospitals and any other places where you receive NHS care
 - the NHS Helpline on **0800 22 44 88**
 - **www.scotconsumer.org.uk/hris**, and your local citizens advice bureau (find your nearest bureau on the internet at www.cas.org.uk or in your local phone book).



This leaflet is produced by the Scottish Executive Health Department.

Further copies of this document are available on request, in audio, Braille and large print formats and in the following community languages; Arabic, Hindi, Cantonese, Bengali, Punjabi, Gaelic, and Urdu. Please contact:

ECSLeaflet@scotland.gsi.gov.uk



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