

PRIVACY LEAFLET - FOR PATIENTS OF RAKAIA MEDICAL CENTRE

How is your health information protected?

The Health Information Privacy Code controls how your medical records are handled. The code has 13 rules governing how people in the health sector can collect, use and disclose your health information.

If you know your rights, you can help to make sure your information is safe.

What is health information and who is a health agency?

Everything your doctor or other health agencies hold about your health is health information. Health agencies include hospitals, ACC and health insurers.

Health information includes prescriptions, notes, diagnoses, test results and records of conversations.

Does your health information have to be kept safe?

Yes. All health agencies must have reasonable security safeguards for your information. This includes securing computer records, having secure storage for paper files, having confidentiality agreements with administrative staff and cleaners, and securely disposing of information when it is no longer needed.

Who gets to see your health information?

Doctors, nurses and specialists directly associated with your care will be able to see your health information so that they can care for you appropriately and safely.

People working for health agencies such as Health New Zealand, Māori Health Authority, ACC or the Ministry of Health may also be able to see your information if they need it to help you or to plan and manage services.

Some other people may be able to access your records, such as:

- if you are under 16 your parents or guardians
- if you are unconscious or otherwise unable to give consent someone who is acting for you (like a person with a power of attorney)
- your insurance company as long as you have given it permission
- a law enforcement body such as the police

Health agencies have to tell you who is going to see your health information and why. If you're not sure what's going to happen with your information, just ask your doctor or other health professional.

If you are concerned about where your information goes or who it goes to, you have the right to speak up. You won't always be able to prevent the disclosure of your health information. Sometimes the law allows it to be disclosed even where you disagree. But you should at least know what's happening, and it's important for health professionals to know if you object to the disclosure.

Can you see your health information?

You have a right to see your health information. Ask your doctor to show you your file or for a copy you can keep. If you ask to see your health information, we have up to 20 working days to respond.

If we do not respond within the 20 working days, please send us a reminder. If you are still not happy, you can complain to the Privacy Commissioner.

If you have reason to believe your information is wrong you have the right to ask us to correct it. We will not delete that information from your files but will record further explanation as to what you feel is correct. This will ensure that all health agencies looking at your record can see what you have asked to be amended.

What is the National Health Index Number (NHI)?

Your NHI number identifies you for health purposes. This number can only be used by people or organisations that are part of the health sector.

What if you are not happy?

Always talk to us first to give us a chance to put things right for you. If you are still not satisfied then you are within your rights to contact the Privacy Commissioner. For instance, you can complain if:

- You have been refused access to your information or we have refused to correct your information
- You think we have wrongly disclosed your information to someone
- You think your information has been used inappropriately or without checking that it is right
- You think your information has not been safely stored

How do you complain to the Privacy Commissioner?

You can send them an email - enquiries@privacy.org.nz, write to them at - Office of the Privacy Commissioner, PO Box 10094, Wellington or call their enquiry line on 0800 803 909

Should you have any questions regarding this information leaflet please do not hesitate to speak to one of our reception team who will be able to help.