

## 6 Take Action! Your medical records.

### Request access to your medical records

If you want more information about what happened during the event you are making the complaint about, it can help to see or get a copy of your medical records.

### How can I access my medical records?

You can ask to access your medical records at any time. Only you or another person you've given permission to can make the request. This could be your legal guardian or someone with Enduring Power of Attorney.

If the record is held by a public health service in the ACT, you can access it by submitting a *Patient request to access Health Records* form. You can contact the service or find the form on the ACT Health website: [www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au).

If a record is created by a private health service or practitioner, such as a GP or a private dental clinic, you will need to contact the service to ask for access to your medical record. If you don't know how to contact the service, you may be able to find it listed on the [Health Direct](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services) website at: [www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services).

The service may ask you to put your request in writing. You can include:

- your details – name, address, phone number and Medicare number
- the information you want
- how you would like to get the information (for example by email or in the mail).

Sometimes a health service can refuse to give you access to your medical records. They must tell you why, and how you can complain about their decision.

### Who needs to keep records?

Not all health care workers have to keep records in the same way as registered health professionals. Under the [Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers](#), they must keep records if the services they have provided are likely to be relevant to your ongoing health care.

If they do keep records, they must keep your medical record private, and you should be able to access it when you ask.

**If you need an interpreter**, phone the **free** Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450. You can also phone the health service and ask for an interpreter.

## How much will it cost?

Canberra Health Services (including the Canberra Hospital, University of Canberra Hospital, and North Canberra Hospital) may charge you a fee to access your record. The maximum fees at January 2024 are:

<b>Access to Records</b>	Viewing only, no copies	\$17.75
<b>Copies of Records</b>	Hard copy - up to 50 pages	\$48.75 (no GST applies)
	Additional pages	40c each
<b>Discounts</b>	Pensioners	50% off standard fee

If the record you want to access is held by a private practice, they could also charge a fee.

This fee covers the cost of preparing the information you asked for. The service may charge you an extra fee to cover the cost of posting you a paper copy of your record.

You can ask for an estimate of the cost. The service may be able to help you to reduce the cost – for example, by getting an electronic copy by email instead of a printed copy by post.

Canberra Health Services review their fees each year. You can find more information on the ACT Health website at [www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au).

## How long will it take to get my records?

The health service must respond to your request within two weeks of receiving it. This could be to ask for payment of the fee to provide the record, to give you a copy of your record, or to explain why they are not going to give you access.

If the service charges a fee to provide a copy of your record, they must provide the copy within a week of receiving your payment (or within 30 days after receiving your request to access your record, whichever is sooner).

The time that health services have to respond to your request to access your medical records are set by the Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997.

## My Health Record

Your health information may also be held in your *My Health Record*. This is the national personal electronic health record system.

To see what information is in your My Health Record you will need to register and log in to your account. You can do that by visiting the My Health Record website: [www.myhealthrecord.gov.au](http://www.myhealthrecord.gov.au).

You can choose to give a family member, friend or carer access to your record. You can do that at the My Health Record website: [www.myhealthrecord.gov.au](http://www.myhealthrecord.gov.au).

**If you need an interpreter**, phone the **free** Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450. You can also phone the health service and ask for an interpreter.

## Understanding your medical records

Medical records can be difficult to understand. It could help to go through them with a doctor you trust. This might be your General Practitioner or another doctor of your choice.

## Request a change to your medical record

If you think the information a health service has recorded about you is incorrect, you can contact them and ask them to update them. They may ask you to put your request in writing. The health service may agree to add a note to your health record, for example to record that the information is not correct, or to record that you disagree with the information.

If you think the health service has shared incorrect information with others, you can ask the service to tell anyone they have shared it with about the change to your record.

Sometimes a health service may decide the information in your record is correct, even if you disagree. You can ask the health service to include a statement that you believe the information is inaccurate.

## Correcting information in *My Health Record*

If you have found an error in your *My Health Record*, you can call My Health Record on 1800 723 471 to ask to have it corrected.

My Health Record allows you to remove or hide certain information yourself. Instructions are available on their website: [www.myhealthrecord.gov.au](http://www.myhealthrecord.gov.au).

If there is information missing from your My Health Record you are able to upload your own additional information and chose who can access it. You can find out how at the My Health Record website.

## Need more information?

The office of the ACT Health Services Commissioner can assist with problems or complaints about health records. Phone 02 6205 2222 or email [HRCIntake@act.gov.au](mailto:HRCIntake@act.gov.au)

The Office of the Information Commissioner has more information about accessing your health records at: [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au).

The Office of the Information Commissioner is an Australian government agency that promotes and upholds your rights to privacy and freedom of information.



If you or someone you care about is experiencing a mental health crisis, contact Access Mental Health on 1800 629 354 or 6205 1065 for immediate assistance. For telephone support phone Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636.

This fact sheet provides general information that is accurate at the time of publication. It is not professional medical or legal advice. This work is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA license