

## **Patient Confidentiality**



**Moss Grove Surgery  
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## **Patient Information Guide**

### **“Reassuring patients about Confidentiality”**

#### **THE INFORMATION WE HOLD AND WHERE WE HOLD IT**

*Confidentiality is at the heart of good medical practice and is based upon mutual trust and confidence.*

Patients' health records are kept by the practice with which they are registered and the hospital or NHS Trust which treats them. Each health professional is responsible for the accuracy and safekeeping of health records.

The records include general information like name, address and date of birth. They also contain details of care such as consultations, illnesses, investigations undertaken, prescriptions received and treatment carried out.

When patients change their GP, health records are returned to the Health Authority to be forwarded onto the new practice and if medically necessary, hospital records can be passed onto the local hospital.

*The law strictly controls the management of all personal information.*

- Anyone who receives information about you has a legal duty to keep it confidential.
- You have a right of access to your health records, with some exceptions.
- Your right of privacy allows you to keep your health records confidential between you and your health professional, with some exceptions.

## **HOW WE USE INFORMATION**

Medical information may be used for many reasons, some examples are to:

- Help us protect the health of the public generally
- Make sure the NHS runs efficiently
- Help the NHS plan and make sure services meet patient needs in the future
- Help the NHS train its staff
- Help the NHS account for its actions
- Carry out medical and other health research for the benefit of everyone
- Prepare statistics on NHS performance and activity
- Investigate complaints or legal claims and respond to your concerns
- Help staff review the care they provide to make sure it is of the highest standard

## **WHY WE KEEP AND SHARE INFORMATION**

We keep information and details of the care you have received in order to help plan your current and future healthcare.

If you receive care from organisations outside of the NHS we may need to share certain information to enable us to work together e.g. private healthcare or Social Services.

In certain circumstances we are required to pass on information, for example, to notify a health visitor of a birth or to protect vulnerable people.

## **WHO SEES THE INFORMATION**

Health professionals, in the course of their work, e.g. Doctors, Nurses, Community Health Workers, Therapists, and Technicians all have access to the health records of their patients.

Other NHS, Practice, Hospital and Social Services staff may have some access to your health records in order to assist in the delivery of your care.

### **Within the NHS:**

- GPs refer patients to hospital for review or treatment and the GP is kept informed of the care the patient has received, for example consultations, tests or treatment.
- GPs must keep Health Authorities up to date with all registration changes and details of certain procedures that are carried out on their patients. Practices also share some information with the Health Authority to help with national programmes for public health like cervical smear tests and breast screening.
- Hospitals share some information with Health Authorities and the NHS Executive for monitoring the provision of patient care.

We are required to inform the Department of Health concerning in the incidence of some communicable diseases, e.g. meningitis and measles, (but not HIV/AIDS) for public health reasons.

Examples of some organisations who may ask for your Health Records:

**The Benefits Agency** - may sometimes need medical reports. These will require your signed consent to enable them to be released.

**Law Courts** - can insist on the disclosure of health records.

**Solicitors** - may ask for medical reports. We always need patients signed consent for us to disclose this information. We will not give details regarding third parties contained in your records.

**Life Assurance Companies** - often ask clients for medical reports. Your signed consent is always required.

***We have a duty to keep your health records accurate***

### **WHAT WE NEED TO DO**

Inform us of any change to your name, address helpline number or marital status so that we can keep your health records up to date at all times.

Unless you advise us to the contrary, we may pass your telephone number onto local hospitals or healthcare organisations in circumstances where we feel it is helpful and appropriate and in the patient medical interest for us to disclose this information.

Please let us know if you **DO NOT** want us to disclose your telephone contact number and we can ensure your records are amended accordingly.

### **AND FINALLY . . . .**

- If you wish to view your health records, the Data Protection Act (1998) allows us to charge a small fee to cover our administration costs.

or

- If you have any concerns about who might see your health records, or have other queries regarding them, contact the Mrs Sonia Clark, Practice Manager at Moss Grove Surgery. Alternatively, for hospital or community health records, contact either the manager responsible for patient's personal information or the person responsible for your care.