

My Health Record

Frequently Asked Questions

What is My Health Record?

MHR is a digital health record for Australians. It is a history of your health, listing things such as immunisations, allergies, previous or current medications, chronic conditions and test results.

Who can access My Health Record?

Health practitioners who are directly involved with your care can see your MHR. You have the option to control who can or can't see your record, and you can set an alert to notify you when someone accesses your account for the first time.

Agencies like the police and ATO can also access your record if they reasonably believe it is necessary to investigate or prosecute a crime.

Why is it opt out, not opt in?

Opt out isn't a friendly move by the government. The truth is, opt out was put in place because the opt in system failed, even after years of push. Only about a quarter of the Australian population have opted in to MHR since 2012.

What happens on January 31, 2019?

On January 31, 2019, a MHR will be automatically generated for you if you don't opt out. If you opt out after this date your MHR will no longer be accessible to you or healthcare professionals involved with your care and no additional information will be uploaded to your record.

How can I opt out?

Opting out can be done online, by calling 1800 723 471, or by using print forms at post offices. Parents can opt out other family members, such as children.

Should I Opt Out?

The pros and cons of My Health Record for patients

The Pros

Patients get more insight into their health

Storing information in one centralised place means you have access to all of yours and your family's health information. This includes information you may never have seen or known about. This transparency gives you the opportunity to play a more active role in your health.

Doctors can provide better care

A MHR means health practitioners have access to more information about you, which means they can provide you with better care. Without a MHR, for instance, you may have to repeat medical tests because earlier results are not accessible.

Emergency personnel can provide better care

In an emergency, health practitioners can gain instant access to your medical details. This will likely save lives in moments where every minute counts.

The Cons

Risk of hacking

Storing information in one centralised place can be a remedy for disaster because it is a honeypot for hackers. For instance, in 2017, The Guardian discovered that Medicare patient details were up for sale on the dark web due to a vulnerability in a government system.

Doctors have too much access

It could be argued that health practitioners having an all-access pass to your health record is overboard. For instance, why should a podiatrist need to know about your sexual history? They shouldn't, but they can.

Agencies (eg. Police, Centrelink, ATO) can gain access

Currently a MHR can be accessed when an agency like the police or ATO "reasonably believes" it's necessary to investigate or prosecute a crime to counter "seriously improper conduct" or to "protect the public revenue". While no documents have been released in the last 6 years, the fact is that legislation approves a certain level of access.

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7 ways to take control of your My Health Record

Tips for patients who have a My Health Record

- 1 Set up a record access code (RAC) to control which healthcare providers can see your MHR
- 2 Set up a limited document access code (LDAC) to control which healthcare providers can access specific documents
- 3 Use a personal access code (PAC) to allow or restrict your nominated representative/s from accessing your MHR
- 4 Regularly log in and check your MHR for accuracy
- 5 Regularly review your MHR access log to see who has viewed your information
- 6 Set up a SMS or email alert to notify you when a healthcare provider accesses your record for the first time
- 7 Beware of email phishing scams. MHR will never ask for your password by email or SMS