

# Privacy at University Health Network

## Information for patients and families

Read this information to learn:

- why we collect your health information
- how we use it
- who we share it with and why
- what your rights are
- where you can go for more information



**At University Health Network (UHN), we treat your health information with respect and sensitivity.**

UHN includes all of the services offered at:

- Toronto Rehabilitation Institute (TR)
- Toronto General Hospital (TGH)
- Toronto Western Hospital (TWH)
- Princess Margaret Cancer Centre (PM)

**Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA)**

UHN is required by law to keep a record of your care while you are a patient. This information is personal. PHIPA is the law of Ontario that sets out rules for the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information. UHN is committed to protecting your privacy, which includes following all the laws that control how your personal health information is collected, used and shared.

**Why is my health information collected?**

We collect basic information about you each time you visit the hospital to properly identify you and ensure the accuracy of your records. For example, we collect personal information like your:

- name
- address
- date of birth
- contact information for emergency contact and next of kin/caregivers

**Important:** we may contact these people in case of emergency, or to make decisions about your care if you are unable to do so. With consent, we may contact these individuals to help with coordinating your care, if needed.

We may collect information from you or from another person acting on your behalf, including information related to your:

- health history
- tests
- procedures

This information is collected and stored in different ways. It may be stored in your paper chart or electronic files.

The people who need your information to provide or support your care are allowed to see it. These people are part of your **health care team**. Your team includes:

- doctors
- nurses
- technicians
- therapists
- other health professionals

Your health care team uses your information to provide you with the best care possible.

## How is my health information used?

We use your health information to:

- **Provide health care services to you**

You will have tests, treatments and visits with your health care team when you come to the hospital. UHN keeps records of this for your ongoing and future medical care.

- **Make our services better**

- UHN may send you a survey. We may ask you questions about the care you received or review records about your care in order to improve our services.
- We may also use this information for risk management purposes.
- Information where your identity is not known may be sent to an outside centre to compare our patient outcomes with those across Canada and worldwide. This will help us understand how we can improve the quality of care we provide.
- We may do testing of our electronic systems to maintain and improve data quality, accuracy and system security.

- **Support UHN research**

All research at UHN is approved by the hospital's research ethics board (REB). As part of the REB's approval process, you are asked to agree (consent) to take part in research wherever possible. When a research study is approved and all privacy laws are followed, then researchers may use your health information.

- **Support UHN's learning activities**

UHN is a teaching hospital. It trains doctors, nurses and other health care professionals. Students work with your health care team and are guided by qualified teachers. These students may see or use your personal health information. UHN's policy is that students use the least amount of personal health information when learning involves patients or their information.

## Who is my health information shared with and why?

We may share your health information with:

- **People you choose to share it with**

For example you may ask UHN to share your information with your family or a lawyer.

- **Other health care providers who are caring for you**

For example, your information can be shared with your family doctor or specialists who provide care to you by phone, fax, email and postal mail.

Information may also be shared through electronic systems and databases, such as ConnectingOntario. These “shared systems” are used by care providers across the province. Only those care providers who provide care to you are allowed to access your personal health information through these shared systems.

In some cases, UHN must share your health information with outside agencies because it’s the law. These agencies include:

- **Health regulatory bodies**

For example, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care may need your health card number (OHIP) to pay for the services you receive at UHN.

- **Public authorities**

For example, by law UHN must report certain infections to Public Health.

- **Government agencies**

For example, the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) may need records if you are injured at work and make a claim for benefits.

- **To fulfill other purposes permitted or required by law**

Please see PHIPA sections 37 and 43 for more information about disclosures that are permitted by law.

Unless you have told us not to, we may also share basic information about you with:

- **Visitors and callers**

Your name, room number and general health are shared with people who ask about you. If you do not want this to be shared, please tell us when you are admitted. You can also speak to your health care provider about removing your name from the directory.

- **Faith representatives**

We may connect you with someone from your faith community who may visit you in the hospital. If you do not want this service, please tell us when you register or are admitted at the hospital.

- **Foundations**

UHN foundations raise money for research, medical education and patient care. If you don't want to be contacted by our foundations after you leave the hospital, please tell us when you are admitted or call 416 946 2114.

### **Storage of personal health information outside of Canada**

While UHN avoids processing or storing of data outside of Canada where possible, some of our vendors who provide support services are not in Canada. As a result, patients' personal information will be subject to another country's laws which may be different, and less protective, than those of Canada.

### **Recording with electronic devices**

To protect your privacy, recording with electronic devices is not allowed in public and common areas of the hospital. UHN is committed to protecting the privacy of all patients, visitors and staff. We will ask you to stop recording if anyone feels uncomfortable. We may also ask you to delete the recording. If you do not stop or delete the recording, a Security officer may need to escort you from the building.

## **Tips to follow when recording a hospital visit (audio or video):**

- Before recording, talk with your health care provider about what part of the visit you want to record and why.
- Ask whether a better option exists, including recording part, but not all, of the visit. Talk about these options with your provider.
- If you and your provider agree to record your visit, ask anyone who will be included for their consent, before recording. This includes physicians, nurses, therapists, technicians etc.

**Important:** Only the people who consented (agreed) can be recorded.

Your provider will document the recording in your UHN medical record (including time/date, who consented and was present, and what was covered).

If you have questions about recording using electronic devices, please contact UHN Privacy at 416 340 4800 ext. 6937 or UHN Patient Relations 416 340 4800 ext. 4907.

To learn more about recording with electronic devices, read our policy.

## **What are my rights?**

### **Seeing your information**

If you would like to see your health record while you are in hospital, talk to one of your health care providers. They can answer your questions or arrange a time to review your record with you.

If you would like to see or receive a copy of your record after you have left the hospital, you can:

- Speak with Health Record Services for more information about getting copies of your records or scheduling an appointment to view your records.

**Toronto General, Toronto Western,  
Princess Margaret**

Phone: 416 340 4771

Email: [HealthRecordServices@uhn.ca](mailto:HealthRecordServices@uhn.ca)

**Toronto Rehab**

Phone: 416 597 3422, extension 4712

Email: [TRHealthRecordsServices@uhn.ca](mailto:TRHealthRecordsServices@uhn.ca)

**Please note:** You may have to pay a fee to receive a copy of your record. For more information about Health Record Services, visit [www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Patient\\_Services/Pages/health\\_records.aspx](http://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Patient_Services/Pages/health_records.aspx)

- Sign up for myUHN Patient Portal (“myUHN”) to see your UHN appointments and health records online. myUHN is a secure website that lets you see most of your results as soon as they are ready.

Ask for a myUHN registration code when you check in at your next appointment or at one of UHN’s Admitting & Registration departments. For more information about myUHN, please visit [www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/myUHN](http://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/myUHN)

**Keeping your information correct**

We do our best to keep your information up-to-date and accurate. If you feel there is inaccurate or incomplete information in your chart (for example, your lab test results are incorrect or your family doctor has changed), please talk to your health care provider. You can also contact Health Record Services (see page 7).

**Withdrawing your consent to use or share your information**

Personal information may be stored in different places, including in UHN’s paper records, UHN’s electronic systems, or other electronic systems shared with organizations outside of UHN. Access, use and disclosure of your information can be restricted in different ways depending on how your information is stored.



The Privacy Office reviews every request to restrict the use and disclosure of personal health information on a case-by-case basis. For more information please contact the Privacy Office (see last page).

### **Protecting your information**

We take steps to protect your information from being:

- lost
- stolen
- inappropriately accessed by people who are not involved in your health care

We follow rules so that only people who perform services for UHN are allowed to access and use our electronic systems. We require that anyone who has access to your information completes privacy training, signs confidentiality agreements and understands UHN's policies and legal obligations. We also do audits to make sure that these rules and the laws are followed.

If we find out your information has been inappropriately accessed or used, we will contact you. You may also contact the Privacy Office if you think your personal health information has been inappropriately accessed or used.

## Where can I find more information?

### UHN's Privacy Office

For more information about how UHN protects your health information or if you have a problem, contact

Carole Garmaise, Director of Privacy:

- Phone: 416 340 4800, extension 6937
- Email: [privacy@uhn.ca](mailto:privacy@uhn.ca)
- Website: [www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Patient\\_Safety\\_Advocacy/Privacy/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Patient_Safety_Advocacy/Privacy/Pages/default.aspx)
- Address: UHN Privacy Office  
190 Elizabeth Street  
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2C4

### Information & Privacy Commissioner of Ontario

If we can't solve your problem or concern, it is your right to contact the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario at:

- Phone: 1 800 387 0073
- Email: [info@ipc.on.ca](mailto:info@ipc.on.ca)
- Website: [www.ipc.on.ca](http://www.ipc.on.ca)
- Address: 2 Bloor Street East, Suite 1400  
Toronto, Ontario M4W 1A8



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