My Health Record

Risks and tips for transgender and gender diverse individuals

15 September 2021

All Australians will receive a My Health Record unless they opt out by 31 January 2019. Some of the privacy and cyber security risks associated with the My Health Record system may be concerning for transgender and gender diverse individuals.

What is it?

Your My Health Record is a digitally accessible record of your medical information. It will include things like your vaccination history, records from tests or scans, information relating to any hospital visits or surgeries, and your GP's records relating to any of your consultations. Your record will be accessible by your treating medical practitioners.

What are the advantages?

- Your medical record is stored in one spot, which is particularly helpful if you move, or if you visit multiple GPs

- Your medical record is easy to find in case of an emergency

- Your record will be complete, which is useful for the doctors treating you

What are the risks?

Privacy

Your My Health Record can be seen by any doctors treating you. If you have a legal guardian, they will also have access to your record. You may also choose to give a friend or family member access voluntarily.

Transgender individuals may not want medical information relating to their gender history to be disclosed to all of their doctors, or to their legal guardian or nominated friend or family member.

Access to your medical record by family members can also be a problem in family violence situations.

Cybersecurity

Like all information online, a digital database is liable to being hacked. This poses a risk to the security of your personal information.

What can I do to minimise risk?

Monitor access

- Review the access log for your My Health Record

- Set up automatic notifications for when a new doctor accesses your record

Restrict access

- Set up a Record Access Code so that only doctors who you give the Code to can view your record

- Set up a Limited Document Access Code for certain sensitive documents so that only doctors with the Code can view those documents

Control content

- Ask your doctor not to upload sensitive information

- Remove information (meaning it won't be accessible but will be archived until 30 years after your death)

- Do not sync Medicare information

Opting out?

The deadline to opt out is **31 January 2019.**

You can opt out at myhealthrecord.gov.au or over the phone at 1800 723 471.

What if I do not opt out?

If you do not opt out, you will automatically receive a My Health Record.

You can cancel your record after 31 January 2019. Following new laws in November 2018, this cancellation will permanently delete from the system all information in your record, including any backups. Deleted information cannot be recovered, and will no longer be available to you and your healthcare providers.

If you have a My Health Record at the time of your death, your medical information will be archived until 30 years after your death.

Can I get a record later?

Yes. You can register for a My Health Record after the opt out date. You can also re-register a cancelled record if you change your mind.

Practical tips

Please note the following information is provided from the My Health Records website.

If you encounter any problems with the My Health Records website, contact the help line on 1800 723 471.

To view your access history log

- Log in to your My Health Record through MyGov
- Click the 'Privacy and Access' tab
- Scroll down to 'Record Access History'
- This will show the last 12 months of activity
- Click 'Show Full Access History' to see older records

To set up access notifications

- Log in to your My Health Record through MyGov
- Click the 'Profile and Settings' tab
- Select your preferred notification method (email or SMS)

To set up a Record Access Code

- Log in to your My Health Record through MyGov
- Select the record you want to apply a code to
- Select the 'Privacy & Access' menu.
- In the 'Access by Healthcare Providers' section, click 'Manage Access' and look for 'All Other Healthcare Providers'. In 'All Healthcare Providers in your care can access this record', select 'Manage Access'.
- On 'Limit access to your My Health Record' page, set your record access code. This code consists of 4 to 8 character code.

To set up a Limited Document Access Code

- Log in to your My Health Record through MyGov
- Select the 'Privacy & Access' menu. In the 'Document Access Settings' section, select 'Manage Access' to expand this section
- To set the code, select 'Set limited document access code' button
- On the 'Grant Access to your Restricted Documents' page, set your preferred limited document access code. This code consists of 4 to 8 character code

To remove information

- Log in to your My Health Record through MyGov
- Navigate to the 'Documents' menu
- Select 'Clinical Records', then select the document type you want to remove
- From the list of existing documents, choose the document you wish to remove and select 'Manage Access'
- Select 'Remove Document' from the options and select a reason for removing
- Click 'Save'
- Select 'Ok' when prompted

To remove Medicare information

- Log in to your My Health Record through MyGov
- Navigate to the 'Documents' menu, then select 'Medicare Overview'
- From the list of existing documents, choose the Medicare document you wish to remove and select 'Manage Access'
- Select 'Remove Document' from the options and select a reason for removing
- Select 'Ok' when prompted

To cancel your record

- Log in to your My Health Record through MyGov
- Select the 'Profile & Settings' tab
- Select 'Profile' and navigate to the bottom of the page
- Read the information and click on 'Cancel My Health Record'
- Have your information handy, including Medicare card, your bank details, your address, and the date of your last doctor's visit