



Patient & Family Guide  
2017

# Privacy of Your Health Information at NSHA

Aussi disponible en français :  
*La confidentialité de vos renseignements  
médicaux personnels à la Régie de la santé de  
la Nouvelle-Écosse (FF85-1758)*



[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

# **Privacy of Your Health Information at NSHA**

## **Protecting your privacy and confidentiality**

Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal health information. We do this by following the Personal Health Information Act. This law balances your right to have your personal health information protected with NSHA's need to plan and deliver health services.

## **Who can access my personal health information?**

Your personal health information is only available to those people who need to know it to provide you with care. This includes doctors, nurses, technicians, therapists and other health professionals. They are responsible for following Nova Scotia's Personal Health Information Act.

## **What personal health information does the law protect?**

The Personal Health Information Act sets rules that NSHA must follow to protect your personal health information. Your health information includes:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Provincial health card number
- Address
- Health history
- Information about the tests, procedures and care you received
- All forms of personal health information, both recorded and unrecorded. For example:
  - › a paper medical chart (recorded)
  - › an electronic test result (recorded)
  - › conversations about your care between health professionals (unrecorded)

## **What information does the law NOT protect?**

The Personal Health Information Act does not protect health information that does not identify you. For example, you might be included in statistics about how many Nova Scotians have diabetes or your test results may be used for training purposes in a hospital with your name removed. Your health information can be used in these ways as long as you cannot be identified. This helps staff to learn and plan.

## **How does NSHA use my personal health information?**

We use and share your personal health information to:

- Treat and care for you during your stay or visit.
- Help other health professionals outside of NSHA who are involved in your care to provide health services to you. This could include your family doctor, pharmacist or nursing home staff.
- Receive payment from your provincial health care plan, private insurer or other body for delivering care to you.
- Support NSHA's educational activities.

- Conduct activities that help us improve the quality of care and patient safety, and manage risk.
- Conduct patient experience surveys.
- Conduct research, if you give your consent. Note: Some research studies do not need your consent. These studies have safeguards in place to protect your privacy under the Personal Health Information Act. This includes a review of all studies by a Research Ethics Board.
- Confirm for family or friends that you are in hospital, and give your room and phone numbers and general condition (e.g. fair, good) on the day they ask for the information.
- Notify a representative of your faith group to visit during your stay, if you wish.
- Plan and manage our operations (e.g. scheduling staff, managing beds and more).
- Help the provincial Department of Health and Wellness plan and manage the health system.
- Meet other purposes allowed under law (e.g. reporting abuse).

## **How does NSHA protect my personal health information?**

NSHA is responsible for any personal health information we collect, use and disclose to provide your health care. We must:

- Tell you about how we will use and disclose your personal health information.
- Have processes in place to protect your personal health information records, whether paper or electronic.
- Tell you how to report if you believe we have not followed privacy rules.
- Tell you who to contact to:
  - › request access to your personal health information
  - › request a correction to your personal health information
  - › answer your questions about privacy and confidentiality

## **What are my rights under the Personal Health Information Act?**

- You have the right to be informed by NSHA about how we will collect, use and disclose your health information.
- You have the right to be told if there has been a breach of your personal health information that could cause you harm or embarrassment.
- You have the right to request access to your personal health information.
- You have the right to request a correction if you believe your information is not correct, complete or up to date.
- You have the right to request a record of who has or may have accessed your personal health information on an electronic information system.
- You have the right to limit or withdraw your consent to the collection, use or disclosure of your health information.
- You have the right to refuse to provide your health card number to anyone who is not authorized to collect it.
- You have the right to make a written complaint to NSHA if you believe that we have not followed privacy law.

## For more information on privacy and confidentiality at NSHA:

Visit: [www.nshealth.ca/your-privacy-nova-scotia-health-authority](http://www.nshealth.ca/your-privacy-nova-scotia-health-authority)

Email: [privacy@nshealth.ca](mailto:privacy@nshealth.ca)

**What are your questions?  
Please ask. We are here to help you.**

### **Looking for more health information?**

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

*Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.*

*Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!*

**Nova Scotia Health Authority**

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The information in this brochure is for informational and educational purposes only.

The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.