

# Online Health Records through the YourHealthNS App

## Frequently Asked Questions for Patients

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## What can I see through my online health records and when will it be available to me?

This document explains the types of health records available in YourHealthNS, the information included, and the date range for each record. It is regularly updated to ensure the details remain current and easy to understand.

Category	Record Type	Available Information	Dates Available
<b>Upcoming Appointments</b>	<p>Records of most upcoming appointments with primary care providers, Nova Scotia Health, and IWK Health.</p> <p>The following appointments will not be displayed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointments booked or updated within the past 7 days.</li> <li>• Specialist appointments outside hospitals. Some cancer care appointments with existing reminders.</li> <li>• Appointments that may involve sensitive information.</li> </ul>	<p>Appointment Records Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ordering provider</li> <li>• Appointment type</li> <li>• Clinic</li> <li>• Date and time</li> </ul> <p><b>Please note that you may need to check in earlier than your scheduled appointment time.</b> Always refer to communication from the clinic that scheduled the appointment for details.</p>	<p>Only appointments occurring within the next 28 days will be displayed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointments only display 7 days after booking or after any change.</li> <li>• Appointments will show until the date of the appointment has passed.</li> </ul>
<b>Medications</b>	<p>Records of filled medication prescriptions.</p>	<p>Medication Records Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name of medicine</li> <li>• Prescribing provider</li> <li>• Date and time prescription was filled</li> </ul>	<p>November 27, 2013 – Present</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drug Identification Number (DIN)</li> <li>• Strength and unit</li> <li>• Directions</li> <li>• Dispensed fill</li> </ul>	
<b>Lab and Diagnostic Imaging</b>	<b>Lab Results</b> for lab tests, such as blood tests, urine tests, and pathology tests.	<p>All Lab Results Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ordering provider</li> <li>• Lab location</li> <li>• Result date and time</li> </ul> <p>Some Lab Results Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test Result</li> <li>• Normal range</li> </ul> <p><b>Note: It is not uncommon for results to be out of range.</b> Your provider will only contact you if your results are concerning based on your individual health.</p>	<p>January 12, 2023 – Present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These records are available after 7 days to allow your provider time to review the results and contact you if needed.</li> </ul>
	<b>Diagnostic Imaging Records</b> for diagnostic imaging tests, such as CT, MRI, x-ray and ultrasound.	<p><b>Diagnostic Imaging Records</b> Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Date and time</li> <li>• Type of test (CT, MRI, x-ray, ultrasound)</li> <li>• Body part</li> <li>• Referring provider</li> <li>• Location of the test</li> </ul>	<p>January 1, 2023 – Present</p>
	<b>Diagnostic Imaging Reports for X-rays</b> Note: X-rays include records and reports.	<p><b>X-Ray Reports</b> Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings</li> <li>• Comparison with any previous x-rays</li> <li>• Patient’s history</li> <li>• Summary</li> </ul>	<p>July 15, 2024 – Present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These records are available after 14 days to allow your provider time to review the results and contact you if needed.</li> </ul>
	<b>Diagnostic Imaging Reports for Ultrasounds</b>	<p><b>Ultrasound Reports</b> Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings</li> </ul>	<p>August 19, 2024 – Present</p>

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	Note: Ultrasounds include records and reports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparison with any previous ultrasounds</li> <li>• Reason for the ultrasound</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These records are available after 14 days to allow your provider time to review the results and contact you if needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Hospital Visits and Stays</b>	<b>Records of your visits to Nova Scotia Health hospitals or clinics that did not require an overnight stay</b> (like a blood collection appointment).  <b>Records of your visits to IWK Health hospitals or clinics that did not require an overnight stay</b> (like a blood collection appointment).	<b>Hospital Visits Records</b> Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provider</li> <li>• Visit location</li> <li>• Clinic location</li> <li>• Appointment type (visit or stay)</li> <li>• Date and time</li> </ul>	December 25, 2015 – Present These records may take up to 2 weeks to become available. In some cases, older records may be available.
	<b>Records of your overnight hospital stays at Nova Scotia Health.</b>		January 1, 2010 – Present <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These records may take up to 2 weeks to become available.</li> </ul>
	<b>Records of your overnight hospital stays at IWK Health.</b>	<b>Hospital Stays Records</b> Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending provider</li> <li>• Hospital location</li> <li>• Encounter type</li> <li>• Arrival date and time</li> <li>• Discharge date and time</li> <li>• Reason for visit</li> <li>• Disposition status (e.g. discharged home)</li> </ul>	December 25, 2015 – Present These records may take up to 2 weeks to become available. In some cases, older records may be available.
			January 1, 2010 – Present <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These records may take up to 2 weeks to become available.</li> </ul>

<b>Health Visits</b>	<b>Records of your primary care visits</b> (family doctor, nurse practitioner, and pharmacists who offer primary care services).	<p>All Health Visits Records Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provider</li> <li>• Visit location</li> <li>• Date and time</li> </ul> <p>Virtual Care Health Visits Records also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointment type</li> <li>• Reason for visit</li> <li>• Requisition issued</li> <li>• Referred specialist</li> <li>• Drug prescribed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary care records are being made available gradually. When available, records will be viewable within 24 hours of the visit.</li> </ul>
	<b>Records of your VirtualCareNS visits</b>	<p>May 21, 2021 – Present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These records may take up to 2 weeks to become available.</li> </ul>	
<b>Immunizations</b>	<b>Immunization records</b> for School Program, COVID-19, flu, and other routine vaccinations.	<p>Immunization Records Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generic name of vaccine</li> <li>• Trade name of vaccine</li> <li>• Date administered</li> </ul> <p>Note: Immunization records are available through VaxRecordNS.</p>	<p>After 2008 – Present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In some cases, older records may be available. These records may take up to 1 month to become available.</li> </ul>
<b>Profile Information</b>	Your profile information is available under Manage Your Account.	<p>Profile Information Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First and last name</li> <li>• Date of birth</li> <li>• Email address</li> <li>• Health card number</li> </ul>	N/A

## Accessing and Understanding your Online Health Records

### How can I get access to view my records through the YourHealthNS app?

- Download the YourHealthNS app or visit the [yourhealthns.ca](https://yourhealthns.ca)
- Click on “Records”
- Click on the “Access Your Health Records” tile, and create or sign in to a My NS Account to access your records.
  - My NS Account is the Government of Nova Scotia’s secure online service. It allows Nova Scotians to create a single account to access multiple online provincial services and verify personal information for online services that require it. It must be renewed on an annual basis. Learn more about My NS here: [About My NS Account \(novascotia.ca\)](https://novascotia.ca).
- When creating your My NS Account, you will be asked to verify your Nova Scotia Health Card Number
- After logging into My NS, you will be able to access your healthcare records

### Is there a way to know if my provider has viewed the results?

The app does not tell you if your provider has viewed your results. Providers will be given seven days to review lab test results and 14 days to review diagnostic imaging results before a patient can see them within YourHealthNS. If you have questions or concerns about your results, you are encouraged to contact your provider.

### Could I potentially see concerning results before my provider is able to contact me?

Providers will be given seven days to review lab test results and 14 days to review diagnostic imaging results before a patient can see them within YourHealthNS, in order to give them the opportunity to contact you with any concerning results. However, patients are encouraged to discuss tests ordered with their provider *before* the test if they have concerns about possible results. It is important to know that test results that fall outside of the normal range are not always concerning.

### How much information will be provided with test results? Will I be able to interpret the information?

If available, test results will be accompanied by an indicator of whether the result is within the normal range. Results that fall

outside of the normal range are not always concerning. You are encouraged to discuss possible results with your provider *before* your test if you are concerned about potential test results.

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**Can I see the pictures from my x-ray, ultrasound, CT, or MRI?**

No. YourHealthNS does not provide access to the medical images taken during your imaging test.

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**Can I view my online health records through the YourHealthNS app if I am a patient with a New Brunswick health card receiving care in Nova Scotia?**

At this time, only patients with Nova Scotia health card numbers can access their health records through the YourHealthNS app.

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**What does it mean if a result says “not specified”?**

“Not specified” means that that part of your health record was blank or information was not inputted by your provider.

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**I am a student at University in Nova Scotia but I do not have a Nova Scotia health card. Can I still access my health records?**

At this time, only patients with Nova Scotia health card numbers can access their health records through the YourHealthNS app.

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**Is the app available outside of North America?**

You are unable to access YourHealthNS outside of North America.

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**Will providing patients with access to online health records lead to an increase in patients’ anxiety and/or confusion regarding certain results?**

Studies in other jurisdictions show providing patients with electronic health records has not increased stress or anxiety while they wait for follow-ups, compared to patients who do not have access to their results.

The evaluation results from the pilot program showed that patients showed a general appreciation for the app’s potential to enhance care experiences. 60% of users felt more involved in their care. 98% of users with access can see themselves continuing

to use the app. 45% of users felt they better understood how their care team is supporting them. 35% of users felt better prepared for their appointments.

**What resources are available to assist patients in navigating their test results?**

Where appropriate, test results within the app will be accompanied by an indicator of whether the result is within the normal range. Clinicians are encouraged to discuss possible outcomes with patients before they go for testing. Patients should be advised that they will only be contacted by their provider if their results are concerning, and that results that fall outside of the normal range are not always concerning.

**Will health records from other provinces be available?**

No. Online health records through YourHealthNS only include data from Nova Scotia.

**What happens to the records of people on the Need a Family Practice Registry?**

Nova Scotians who do not have a family doctor or nurse practitioner can still access their health records through YourHealthNS.

**I had an appointment in the app – why is it gone now?**

If any changes were made to your appointment, it will reappear in the app 7 days after the change. If the appointment is moved to a later date, it will only reappear when it is within 28 days of the appointment date.



## **Privacy, Security and Participation**

### **Is my information safe and secure?**

All data will be stored in a secure cloud environment. Your data will not be stored on the YourHealthNS app and can only be viewed through My NS Account from within the app, upon authentication.

To find out what information is collected, how it's used and disclosed, how information is protected or to learn more about your privacy rights and choices, see our [Privacy Notice](#).

### **Where will my healthcare data be stored?**

All patient data is being securely stored on cloud-based servers in Canada.

### **Why were amendments made to the Personal Health Information Act?**

The changes that were made to the Act allow electronic records to be available to patients who want them. They don't change the strict security measures in place. The Personal Health Information Act is in place to protect data from being misused in any way.

### **Why aren't patients able to choose not to share their data with government?**

Every time a patient interacts with the health system in Nova Scotia, records are created. These include the healthcare provider's own records, which they must retain to document the care they provide, as well as administrative records that are needed to operate the health system. It is important for patients to know that records are created and maintained according to legal and operational requirements, and that nobody has the option to 'opt out' from these requirements.

The Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) recognizes the right of all individuals to protect their personal health information alongside the need for it to be collected and used to manage and operate the health care system. The Act outlines the obligations placed on custodians to provide the highest level of protection for all personal health information.

### **How is the data being protected?**

We believe that healthcare data should be protected at all costs. Personally identifiable health data is only accessible to the patient, and to the very small group of employees who must access the data for the sole purpose of maintaining the system and ensuring the data is available to patients who choose to access it. The data is stored on a secure cloud-based server, which has been tested and has passed multiple privacy and security assessments.

The app does not contain any personal health information. It's simply the tool that allows a patient to access their information.

There are very strict measures in place to limit who can access the server. The Personal Health Information Act requires data to be protected from theft, loss, any unauthorized access and any form of misuse. The Electronic Health Record regulations require any information that gets used for planning or management purposes be de-identified before it is accessed by the Department of Health and Wellness.

### **Who has access to the information?**

There are strict limits on the ability to access personally identifiable information. It is mostly limited to the patients themselves.

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There is a very small group of employees will have access to the data for the sole purpose of maintaining the system, performing data quality assessments, and ensuring the data is available to patients who choose to access it. These employees are bound by confidentiality agreements. They may only access the system and data per the Personal Health Information Act and the regulations under the Act. This Act and the regulations govern how personal health information and data may be accessed and used and how it must be protected. We also have controls in place to provide oversight and monitoring of the system that includes logging and auditing capabilities.

Statistical data collected through your use of the application will be aggregated and de-identified before it reaches the Department where it can be used for the purpose of health system planning.

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### **Can patients revoke consent for their online health records through YourHealthNS?**

Nova Scotians can withdraw consent from having your health records viewable through the YourHealthNS app.

It's important for Nova Scotians to understand that any time you receive a healthcare service in Nova Scotia a health record is created. This record can then be used by healthcare providers across the healthcare system to have a better understanding of your complete medical history and provide you care that is appropriate. Health records will always be part of the system but it's up to each patient to decide if they want to access them. The only way to do that will be through YourHealthNS with a secure login, or requesting paper records directly from a provider which may result in a fee.

When you use YourHealthNS to view your health records, your personal health information is collected, used and disclosed under the authority of the NS Personal Health Information Act. You have the right to withdraw your consent to the use or disclosure of your personal health information for this purpose at any time.

You can find the instructions to withdraw your consent [here](#).

### **What security measures are in place to protect patients' online privacy while using My NS Account?**

All healthcare data will be provided through My NS Account, which uses industry recognized security safeguards to protect users' personal information. When personal information is collected, used or disclosed, we follow the [legislation that governs how personal information](#) must be handled in the province of Nova Scotia.

To find out what information is collected, how it's used and disclosed, how information is protected or to learn more about your privacy rights and choices, see our [Privacy Notice](#).

### **What about people who are elderly or don't want or have access to the equipment to access their records online? What options are available to them?**

We understand that not everyone will be comfortable or able to access their records this way. Patients can still request paper copies from their healthcare provider but there may be a fee set by the provider.

### **Will providing health records available online isolate Nova Scotians with limited online access or who are not comfortable using mobile apps or online platforms?**

Health records and data will still be made available in the traditional methods. Making health records and data available online is one way that Nova Scotia is providing citizens with access to their information. Digital health care options can improve access for seniors, people living in remote areas and those who have mobility issues.

### **You've included records from the IWK, but parents can't see their children's results, why?**

Families have other mechanisms to request access to their children's health records. In developing the records component of the app, the focus has always been to provide patients with their own personal health information. The age to register to access this information through the app is 16. Anyone under 16 is unable to create an account and dependent profiles cannot be linked to those of parents or guardians.

It's also important to remember that the IWK also provides women's health and by providing access to IWK health records, we're providing women who have access services through the IWK a more complete picture of their health history and information.

**What is different about this compared to the electronic records program that Nova Scotia introduced in 2016, which ended in 2019?**

While the MyHealthNS program was ended in 2019, that pilot project provided many learnings which Nova Scotia Health used to inform the development and design of this new system.

YourHealthNS is an internal, purpose-built platform that uses the secure My NS Account platform and integrates with existing platforms such as Telus and Accuro EMR data, VirtualCareNS, Meditech, STAR and EDIS, which many clinicians are already using to digitally maintain patient records.

## **Understanding Your Diagnostic Imaging Reports**

**What is a radiology or diagnostic imaging report?**

Your healthcare provider may request a test that will take detailed images to view inside your body. This will allow them to get a better understanding of the health of your organs, bones, or tissues. These images are reviewed by a specialist physician called a radiologist. The radiologist will interpret the imaging and provide a medical opinion based on the imaging findings and the patient information provided by your healthcare provider. This is contained in the radiology/diagnostic imaging report.

**Can I see the images from my x-ray or ultrasound?**

The images from your test are not available. Special medical training is needed to understand what an image is showing. The radiologist who reviews the images will describe what they have found in the report you receive.

### **Why is this now available to me?**

Having access to this information will allow you to better understand your health and have informed conversations with your healthcare team. It will allow you to better understand your progress, and treatment options, and allow you to have your health information automatically documented for you.

### **I am nervous about viewing my X-ray or ultrasound results. How will I be supported?**

We understand that some patients may be nervous to view their x-ray or ultrasound results. Your results will not be available until 14 days after your provider has received it. This will give your provider time to review it and contact you if they have any results or concerns that they wish to discuss with you before you see the results on your own. It is also important to remember that you have the choice to look at your results or not.

It is important that you direct questions or concerns to your healthcare provider, as you normally would. This will help you avoid any unnecessary stress or misunderstandings. If you don't have a primary care provider, visit [virtualcarens.ca](https://virtualcarens.ca) to register for VirtualCareNS and connect with a primary care provider.

### **Will my prenatal ultrasound report show the biological sex of my unborn child?**

Yes. If you are far enough along in your pregnancy to determine the biological sex of your unborn child, this information will be visible in your ultrasound report. At this time, we are unable to hide this information within the report.

### **What is an incidental finding?**

An incidental finding refers to something extra that was found by the radiologist while viewing your image. It is something that was not related to the reason your healthcare provider ordered the test.

Incidental findings are common and are not always a cause for concern. People can have all sorts of spots, growths, or bits of damaged tissue inside their bodies without ever having a problem.

Medical imaging technology has improved and now gives us more detailed pictures. This has made incidental findings more common.

### **What will happen if my results show an incidental finding?**

Your healthcare provider will know what to do based on what the incidental finding shows.

If your image shows an incidental finding:

- Your healthcare provider may be able to tell you that there is no cause for concern and nothing else needs to be done.
- Your healthcare provider may decide it's something they want to keep an eye on or may order more tests.

If you have had the same test in the past, your doctor may compare the older test results with the newer one to see if there has been a change.

It is important to trust your healthcare providers' medical expertise and ask them any questions you may have. They can tell you what your options are and, together you can decide if you need treatment or more tests.

### **How many years of X-ray and ultrasound results will be available to me?**

X-ray results will be available for any reports that were completed on or after July 15, 2024. Ultrasound results will be available for any reports that were completed on or after August 5, 2024.

### **How long does it take for my X-ray and ultrasound results to appear in YourHealthNS?**

Your results will be available 14 days after your provider has received the final report. In most situations, your provider will receive the final report a few days after your test, but there are some exceptions.

### **How old do I have to be to see my results?**

All online health records within YourHealthNS, including diagnostic imaging reports, are only available to Nova Scotians over the age of 16 with a valid Nova Scotia health card.

### **What should I do if I have questions or concerns about my X-ray or ultrasound results?**

It is important to follow your usual process and conversations with your healthcare provider. If you don't have a primary care provider, visit [virtualcarens.ca](https://virtualcarens.ca) to register for VirtualCareNS and connect with a primary care provider.

### **Will my primary care provider be able to see my results?**

Your results will be provided to the healthcare provider who ordered the X-ray or ultrasound, and your primary healthcare provider, if you have one. Only you can access your information within the YourHealthNS app.

## **Contact Information**

### **Who do I contact for help with My NS Account?**

Contact the Government of Nova Scotia's My NS Account support team at 1-844-322-9375.

### **Who do I contact for support?**



If you are viewing this document online, you can click [here](#) to access our Support form. To get support while using YourHealthNS, click the three horizontal lines in the upper right-hand corner and then click Support. You can also visit [yourhealthns.ca](http://yourhealthns.ca) and click “Support” in the upper right-hand corner.

**Who do I contact with concerns about my personal health information?**

If you have a concern regarding your personal health information, please contact the Department of Health and Wellness Health Privacy and Records Management at [phia@novascotia.ca](mailto:phia@novascotia.ca).

**Who do I contact if I think there is an error in my health information?**

You can contact our Support team. If you are viewing this document online, you can also click [here](#). To get support while using YourHealthNS, click the three horizontal lines in the upper right-hand corner and then click Support. You can also visit [yourhealthns.ca](http://yourhealthns.ca) and click “Support” in the upper right-hand corner.

**Who do I contact if I have feedback about YourHealthNS?**

To access the feedback option while using YourHealthNS, click the three horizontal lines in the upper right-hand corner and then click Feedback. You can also visit [yourhealthns.ca](http://yourhealthns.ca) and click “Feedback” in the upper right-hand corner.

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