What you need to know about your GP online records

Wouldn't it be great if you could look at your GP records online?

Well, you can! You can also book and cancel appointments at your GP surgery and order repeat prescriptions online. You can already see some of the information in your GP online records, including your medications and allergies. During the next year, you will be able to see even more. This will include illnesses, immunisations and test results. Each GP surgery will make this information available at different times, as their computer systems become ready.

Just like online banking, you can look at your GP records on a computer, a tablet or a smartphone, using a website or an app. If you would like to start using online services, see the Getting Started with GP Online Services guide for more information. Information on how to get started is also available online at: **www.nhs.uk/patientonline** or from your surgery or on their website.

What's in it for you?

- You can look at your records whenever you choose to, without needing to print them. Online records are up to date and more secure than a printed paper record which could get lost or seen by others.
- People who have long term conditions, for example diabetes, hypertension or coronary heart disease, have found that looking at their test results online helps them make positive changes to improve their health. They can see if their condition is improving or getting worse by looking at past test results. Adam, a patient at University Health Centre said 'Record access is useful for those, like me, who need to have more regular contact with their GP'.
- You can look at your medical records before your appointment to see if there is anything you need to discuss with your doctor or nurse. This could be your test results, illnesses you have had in the past or any new information added to your records. This would help you discuss any concerns you may have and help you benefit more from your appointment.
- Sometimes when you see your doctor, you are given a lot of information and might not be able to remember it later. You may also want further information once you have had time to think about what was said. You can look at your online records after your appointment to make sure you understood what your doctor or nurse said.
- One of the most useful things patients have found is that you can make sure your medical information is accurate. For example, you will be able to let your doctor know if you have an allergy to a medicine and it is not recorded.
- Before you go on holiday, you can check if your vaccinations are up to date without having to go to your surgery.

Understanding your records

Your records are written to help medical people look after you and so in some cases, you may not understand everything you see. If you find anything difficult to understand, as well as talking to your doctor or nurse, you can go to the NHS Choices website by using this link **www.nhs.uk**. NHS Choices is the NHS website for patients so you can look for information on illnesses, improving health and to find NHS services in your local area.

Other websites frequently used to search for information on illnesses and test results are Patient – **www.patient.info** and Lab Test Online UK – **www.labtestsonline.org.uk**. Although these are not owned or checked by the NHS, other patients have found them useful.

A few things to think about

There are a few things you need to think about before registering for online records. On very rare occasions:

- Your GP may not think it in your best interest for you to look at your GP records online. If this happens, your GP will discuss their reasons with you. It is up to your GP to decide if you should be allowed access to your online records.
- You may see your test results before your doctor has spoken to you about them. This may be when you cannot contact your surgery, or when your surgery is closed. This means you will need to wait until an appointment is available to talk to your doctor.
- Information in your medical records might need correcting. If you find something you think is not correct, you should contact your surgery. The staff will be able to answer your questions and set things right when needed. Please bear in mind that you cannot change the record yourself.
- There may be information in your medical records that you did not know was there or that you had forgotten about, such as an illness or an upsetting incident. If you see anything you did not know about that worries you, please speak to your surgery and they will discuss this with you.
- If you see someone else's information in your record, please log out immediately and let your surgery know as soon as possible.
- If you have questions about any of the above points, please talk to your surgery and they will be able to advise you further.