

Privacy of Your Personal Health Information (PHI) at Nova Scotia Health

Notes:

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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Privacy of Your PHI at Nova Scotia Health

Protecting your privacy and confidentiality

Nova Scotia Health is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal health information (PHI). We do this by following the Nova Scotia *Personal Health Information Act (PHIA)*. This law balances your right to have your PHI protected, with Nova Scotia Health's need to provide health services.

- 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 accessed your PHI 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 make a formal complaint to Nova Scotia Health if you believe that we have not followed privacy law.

Who can access my PHI?

There are many roles within Nova Scotia Health that require access to your PHI. These include doctors, nurses, technicians, therapists, and other health professionals. All staff are responsible for following *PHIA*.

For more information on privacy and confidentiality at Nova Scotia Health:

- › Visit: www.nshealth.ca/about-nova-scotia-health/your-privacy-nova-scotia-health
- › Email: privacy@nshealth.ca
- › Phone (toll-free): 1-833-213-1634

How does Nova Scotia Health protect my PHI?

Nova Scotia Health is responsible for any PHI we collect, use, and disclose to provide your care.

We must:

- Tell you how we will use and disclose your PHI.
- Have processes in place to protect your PHI records (paper and 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 PHI.
 - › request a correction to your PHI.
 - › answer your questions about privacy and confidentiality.

What are my rights under *PHIA*?

- You have the right to be informed by Nova Scotia Health about how we will collect, use, and disclose your health information.
- You have the right to be told if any of your PHI that could cause you harm or embarrassment has been leaked (released without permission).
- You have the right to request access to your PHI.

How does Nova Scotia Health use my PHI?

We use and share your PHI to:

- Treat and care for you during your visit or stay.
- Help other health professionals outside of Nova Scotia Health provide health services to you. This could include your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner), pharmacist, or nursing home (long-term care) staff.
- Receive payment from your provincial health care plan, private insurer, or other company responsible for payment for delivering care to you.
- Support Nova Scotia Health's educational activities as a learning institution for health care professionals.
- 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 rules and methods in place to protect your privacy under *PHIA*. This includes a review of all studies by a Research Ethics Board.

- Confirm for your loved ones that you are in the hospital, and give them your room and phone numbers and general condition (fair, good) on the day they ask for the information.
- Ask a representative of your faith group to visit you during your stay, if you wish.
- Plan and manage our operations (like scheduling staff, managing beds, and more).
- Help the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness plan and manage the health system.
- Meet other purposes either required or allowed under law (like reporting abuse or providing information to an investigator).

What personal information and personal health information (PHI) does the law protect?

PHIA sets rules that Nova Scotia Health must follow to protect your PHI. Your PHI includes:

- Your name
- Your date of birth
- Your provincial health card number
- Your mailing address
- Your email address

- Your health history
- Information about the tests, procedures, and care you received
- All forms of PHI, 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?

- *PHIA* 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.
 - › Your test results may be used for training 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.