

HIPAA & Your Privacy Rights

We strongly believe in doing everything we possibly can to safeguard the privacy and security of your health information and records.

As a result, we have made some changes in our office management procedures to make sure we follow the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Passed into law in 1996, HIPAA sets federal standards for the privacy and security of patient information for all healthcare providers, plans, insurance companies and anyone they do business with.

HIPAA gives you additional rights regarding control and use of your health information, meaning **you have more access and control than ever**. Please take a few minutes to review these new rights. We're happy to answer any questions you may have.

Control Over Your Health Information

All healthcare providers (and health plans) are now required to give you a written explanation of how they use and disclose your personal health information before they can treat you. This way, you can decide if a provider is doing everything they should to protect your privacy before you choose them as your caregiver.

We must, by law, post a Notice of Privacy Practices, which outlines how we secure the privacy of patient information, in a place where you can easily see it.

We must get your signature for non-routine uses and disclosures of your information. A non-routine use is any situation not directly related to treatment, payment or operations. For example, if your child is going to summer camp and the camp needs a medical history, you will be asked to authorize us to release it before we can send the information. You have the right to say no, and you don't have to tell anyone why.

Authorizations of non-routine information are one-time-only, case by case, for the use defined by you.

Access To Your Health Information

You can get copies of your medical records simply by asking for them. Healthcare providers are required to get you a copy of your records within 60 days of your request. There may be a cost for this service.

Providers also must give you a history of non-routine disclosures if you ask for it. All you need to do is ask for the record and it is provided to you – no justification is needed.

You can also amend your medical records. You cannot change the existing record, but you can add notes or comment on any procedures, treatments, payments or operations.

The provider then has the right to respond to your amendment. This way, you can be sure your records reflect your side of the story about treatment and payment issues.