



Patient confidentiality

Your information: A guide to why the EVH collects information about you and how it is used

This page explains why personal information about you is collected at the Evangelismos Hospital (EVH), the ways in which such information could be used, and your rights under the Data Protection Act 2001.

How we use your information to help you

When you see a doctor, or go to hospital, a record of your care is kept. Your record includes details such as your name, address, contact details and date of birth. It is important that you tell us if any of your details change. Your record also contains facts about your health, including appointments, treatments and test results. It might also contain information based on the professional opinion of the staff caring for you.

Your records are used to:

Make sure that the staffs caring for you have accurate, up-to-date information to help them decide the best possible care and treatment for you

Share information about the treatment you need with other staff and organisations caring for you to ensure you are properly looked after. Make sure that your concerns can be properly looked into if you have a complaint

Make sure we have an accurate record if we have to review your care

Information from your records, with your name and other personal details removed, may be used to manage health services including:

- To monitor and improve the quality of care received by patients
- To make sure that treatments and services meet the needs of local communities. (This may include sharing information with other organisations)
- Training and educating staff

Keeping your information confidential

Everyone working for the EVH has a legal duty to maintain the highest level of confidentiality. All staff members are instructed on handling information confidentially.

Our computer systems are designed with a number of security features. Your information will be stored, managed and used with the greatest possible care.

To make sure you receive all the care and treatment you need, we might share relevant information about you with other organisations (see below), either via paper or by access to shared computer systems.

Such organisations include:

- Your Medical Insurance Company
- Hospitals, walk-in-centres, out-of-hours doctors
- Community services (nurses, midwives and therapists)
- Voluntary care organisations
- Private sector organisations (private hospitals, care homes and hospices)
- We will talk to you to make sure you are aware of any information we share



You can raise any concerns you might have at any time. If we are unable to contact you, we will only share information where we can demonstrate it is in the best interest of yourself or another individual. This is to ensure that you receive the best quality of care or are protected from any harm.

When information is shared, it is passed securely to, and kept confidential by, the people who receive it. It will only be used for the purpose for which it has been shared.

With your consent, information can be shared with relatives, partners or friends who may act as a carer for you. Sharing information can help your family or carer understand the support you require. During an assessment or review of your care, we will ask what information you want shared with your family or carer. We will record your views in our records.

Sharing your information without your consent

We will normally inform you and ensure you are happy for your information to be shared, but there are times when we might need to share your information without your consent. This will only happen where we are legally required to do so, or the law allows us to do so in order to protect you or other people.

Such situations include:

- Where there is a risk of harm or abuse to you or other people
- Where a serious crime, such as an assault, is being investigated or where it could be prevented
- To control infectious diseases such as meningitis, tuberculosis (TB) or measles
- Notification of a birth
- Where the courts have made a formal order in relation to a court case
- We will try to inform you if we share your information without your consent.

Research

Staff at the EVH undertake research to improve the treatment of medical conditions and you might be asked if you would like to take part in specific research projects. Most research that involves patients, their tissue or their personal information requires their explicit, written, informed consent. There is no obligation for you to take part if you do not want to do so. You can refuse to participate, and this will not affect your treatment in any way.

The patient information sheet for a specific research project that you are given before giving consent will detail exactly what information will be collected and who will have access to it. At the EVH we also have the EVH Research Programme and Lifebank, where patient information sheets are more generic, but describe the nature of projects that are undertaken as part of the programme. All research requires approval from a number of relevant regulatory authorities such as the EVH Research Ethics Service, whose role is to ensure that patients and their data are used within legal requirements.

We will only use your information within research, clinical audit or service evaluation if this is legally appropriate or if we have gained your consent. Any information shared with researchers who are not part of your clinical team will be anonymised so that patients are not identifiable in any way.



How we record your information

Information is recorded on paper and electronically on computer systems. Computers enable information to be shared between staff members who care for you so that they have the right information at the right time. A great deal of security is put into these systems and how they are run to ensure your information is confidential. If you have questions about how your information is protected on computer systems, please ask. An explanation on security will be given and you will be informed of options you may have to restrict access.

Further information and accessing your records

If you would like to know more about how we use your information you can:

- Speak to the person in charge of your care
- Raise a query with our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
- They will ensure you are provided with a detailed response.

If you wish to see or have a copy of your records, please write to the health records manager at the EVH. You may be charged an administration fee. You should be aware that in exceptional circumstances some information may be withheld to protect you from undue harm, or where a third party is involved.