

Online Medical Record Access

Guide for Patients

This practice is now offering you the opportunity to use the internet to securely view your electronic medical record held by the surgery. There are also links to information leaflets about diseases, tests, investigations, support groups and medications and links to websites such as NHS Direct and patient.co.uk where you can find more information to help you understand about what you read in your record.

NB The service is currently only available for patient aged 16 and over. We hope to extend this facility to the under 16s at a later date.

This is a detailed guide, but please read it all. It contains important information that you need to use the medical record viewer safely.

How to Register for the Patient Access Medical Record Viewer

You need to be registered to use Patient Access before you can apply to view your medical records online.
If you are not already registered, please register at www.patientaccess.com

Once you are registered to use Patient Access, you will need to submit a consent form and include two forms of ID. The consent form can be found on the surgery website. The 2 forms of ID should consist of:

- *one of the following: **passport or photo driving licence** AND*
- ***one official letter** bearing your name and address dated within the last three months from any of the following: your bank, building society, local council, utility company or landline telephone provider*

Before you complete the consent form you should be happy that you understand what the system does and what your responsibilities are.

Please be aware that Online Medical Record Access may not be appropriate in all cases and the GP will write to you if they feel that Online Medical Record Access is not suitable for you.

If access is approved, *which may take up to 7 days*, your account will be enabled. You will receive an email once your access has been approved by the GP.

What Can I See?

The system allows you to view the following areas of your medical record:

- A summary that gives you the most important and recent entries in your health record
- Consultations including: date, health professional seen, reason for visit, history, examination, outcome, investigations, etc
- Allergies
- Patient Information Leaflets linked from the diagnoses in the medical record section
- Results showing recent investigations such as blood results, blood pressures and x-rays
- Some vaccinations
- Medications
- Letters to and from the GP

Where is my confidential medical information held whilst I am viewing my online medical record and who has access to it?

The information you view online comes from St Wulfstan Surgery's clinical system. This information is encrypted and securely sent to your computer. None of the medical information that is shown on the online system is held permanently on any computer except the server which holds the original data for your surgery.

When you log off from the online system or if a problem occurs with your computer, for instance a power failure, all your confidential information is cleared from the system. Using the online system does not allow any extra people to view your medical information other than the people who would normally have access to it in the GP practice.

How will other people be prohibited from seeing my record?

To view your online record you have to identify yourself with a password and a User ID that only you know. Unless you reveal this information to someone else you will be the only person able to access your medical record via the online system.

What if I find an error in my medical record or if I see someone else's medical information?

On the Test Results page some readings may be recorded differently in the Normal/Abnormal column than they are in the 'Comments' section of the same page. The readings in the column are automatically generated by the laboratory but the Comments are those made by one of our GPs here at St Wulfstan. They may differ because that result is normal or abnormal *for you*. This is not an error. All test results received from the lab are reviewed by our doctors.

If you do find any errors in your medical record you must inform the practice using the '[contact us](#)' page on the surgery website.

If you see someone else's information you should immediately exit from the system and inform the practice using the '[contact us](#)' page.

Remember to log out from the medical record viewing system when you are finished.

Other considerations:

Having access to their medical records has proved popular for many patients elsewhere in the country. Before requesting access to your records it is important that you look at both the advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages 😊

GP/Healthcare - The patient has an active role in their own healthcare and develops a good relationship with their GP and practice.

Results - You can check any results or letters as soon as they arrive in the practice without ringing the surgery.

Access abroad - You may be in another country and taken ill. You may decide to allow the doctor access to your records (a personal decision)

A&E or Outpatients - If you are going to see a healthcare professional in hospital you can allow them to see your records online or print out the relevant information and take it with you. This can be very helpful to the consultant.

Care in the Community - It might be that you are receiving care at home and it is necessary for the results of tests to be known before treatment is given. You can check the results yourself or allow anyone else you see fit to do so.

Relatives, carers or other third parties having access - **Only if you wish**, you could share all your records with third parties or just part by printing off the relevant sections.

Saving time - For most people there is never enough time – doctors included. Much time can be saved by checking blood test results, x-rays or letters. If these are normal it will save time by not having to phone or travel to the surgery. It could leave an appointment free for the doctor to see another patient and saves time for reception staff answering the telephones.

Information for forms (insurance, travel) - If you need to know when you had your immunisations or what allergies you have or are asked questions about any significant illnesses, you will be able to look them up yourself. Please note that old immunisations may not be available as these may be stored on your paper records.

Better understanding - If you did not understand the conversation with the doctor or nurse, you can look at the record of that consultation. Patients have found that this makes the discussion easier to understand and remember. You will also find the information buttons explain technical terms for you. This can be extremely helpful.

Medication information - You can easily check details about any medication you are taking by clicking on the blue '?' button. You can check what results mean or read up on a condition by using the links provided. There are also links to support groups e.g. Diabetes UK

Security - It's as safe as internet banking **IF** you keep your password secure. Don't leave your password where it can be found. Don't use obvious ones such as names, birthdays or anniversaries etc.

Disadvantages ☹️

Forgotten history - There may be something in your history you had forgotten. It might be information you had put to the back of your mind and are now confronted with it!

Complex information - The record is designed to be used by doctors for doctors. There will be abbreviations and technical terms. However, most patients understand most of what they read and the information buttons linked with the problem offer detailed explanations. Please ask if you don't understand.

Test Results - Results can be difficult to understand. Results may be abnormal and cause you to worry. If this should happen:

- Ring the surgery and ask for telephone consultation
- If the surgery is closed
 - Don't look at the results if you are prone to worry
 - Wait until the surgery opens before checking
 - Speak with NHS Direct

Remember had you not had access you would not have known the results until the doctor/practice contacted you or you called for the results

Third Party information

A patient may want to tell the doctor something about their spouse/partner/child in confidence and the doctor will record this information. You must consider that:

- The doctor needs to record this information or it may get overlooked or forgotten
- You may read something in your records from a third party that you may find upsetting
- The information recorded may be inaccurate and cause problems.

Be aware that:

- Password
 - These are case sensitive (upper and lower case are not interchangeable)
 - Take care to differentiate between 0 and O
- Identity theft
 - Addresses, NHS or NI numbers will not be shown on screen unless you have a letter open
- What if I mess it up?
 - No matter what you click you cannot alter your record. It is a 'read-only' record

What to do next

Carefully weigh up the advantages against the disadvantages. Consider, are there other issues that have not been answered for you? It's up to the individual to decide if they want access and not other members of the family.

If any of the disadvantages are a problem for you then Medical Record Access may not be for you. The treatment you receive or the relationship with your doctor will not be affected in any way. You can still use the online appointment system and order your repeat prescriptions online.

Now you have read the patient guidance please continue to the consent form which can be found [HERE](#)