To help make decisions about your care quickly and efficiently, your health information is available through a province-wide electronic record system named Alberta Netcare, under the authority of the Health Information Act (HIA).

Alberta Netcare, also known as the Alberta Electronic Health Record, is a network of information systems that allows authorized users to see prescriptions, lab results, diagnostic images (e.g. x-rays and ultrasounds) and hospital reports (e.g. hospital discharge summaries). Netcare is used throughout Alberta in hospitals run by Alberta Health Services and Covenant Health and in medical clinics and pharmacies.

Consent to have your health information included in Alberta Netcare is not required by law, but you have six rights that allow you to exercise privacy control.
You have the right to...

1. **Know why your health information is collected**

   When a health services provider collects health information from you, they must take reasonable steps to explain the purposes of the collection. You may ask whether your health information will be accessible in Netcare.

   If the person collecting your health information does not know, they must be able to direct you to someone who can answer your questions about the collection.

2. **Ask for a copy of your Netcare record**

   You may ask an authorized user for a copy or print-out of the health information about you that is available in Netcare. This information may be released to you informally. Otherwise, you have the right to make a formal access request to your health services provider under the HIA.

   To make a formal access request for your Netcare information, submit your request in writing to an authorized user, or to Alberta Health if your health services provider is not using Netcare.

   Your request must be answered within 30 days.

3. **Limit access to your Netcare record**

   You cannot opt-out of having your health information in Netcare, but you may ask to have your health information “masked” in Netcare.

   When your health information is masked, any user who searches for your records will see they are restricted from view. An authorized user may remove your Netcare mask in limited circumstances, including emergencies, or where you give permission. If you change your mind about having your health information masked in Netcare, you can request that the mask be removed.

To request or remove a mask on your Netcare record, contact your health services provider (if they are an authorized user) or Alberta Health.

4. **Know who has looked at your information in Netcare**

   The HIA requires that an audit log be kept of all authorized users that access your Netcare record. You have the right to ask Alberta Health for a copy of this log by making a formal request in writing. Alberta Health must respond to your request within 30 days.

   You may contact the health services providers who accessed your record to explain any of the accesses.

5. **Ask that errors be corrected**

   If you believe there is an error or omission in your Netcare record, discuss the matter with an authorized user. Routine corrections may be made informally. Otherwise, you have the right to make a formal correction request under the HIA.

   To make a formal correction request in your Netcare record, submit your request in writing to an authorized user, or to Alberta Health if your health services provider is not using Netcare.

   Your request must be answered within 30 days.

6. **Ask for an independent review**

   You may ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review or investigate if you are not satisfied with a decision or response you receive about any of these rights.
IS MY HEALTH INFORMATION IN NETCARE?

Yes. At least some basic registration information about every Albertan is viewable through Netcare. Systems were linked to Netcare at different times around the province, so the amount of health information on your record depends on where you live. Eventually, all Albertans’ core health information will be accessible through Netcare.

NO CONSENT?

The ability to share and access health information to provide health services without patient consent has been part of the Health Information Act since it came into force in 2001. In 2006, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner reviewed a Privacy Impact Assessment for Netcare submitted by Alberta Health and accepted that health information could be shared via Netcare under legal authority, rather than consent.

WHO MAKES THE RULES FOR NETCARE?

Decisions about the rules for access, use, disclosure, retention and protection of health information in Netcare are made by the Minister of Alberta Health on the advice of a data stewardship committee that includes members from the health professions and public representatives.

WHO CAN SEE MY INFORMATION IN NETCARE?

Only authorized users can see your health information in Netcare.

“Custodians” and their “affiliates” can become authorized users of Netcare when they meet privacy security requirements set out in the HIA.

“Custodian” is a term used in the HIA to establish who is subject to that law and who is responsible for safeguarding your health information. Custodians include Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services, Covenant Health and regulated health professionals, such as physicians, pharmacists, and nurses.

An “affiliate” refers to someone who performs a service for a custodian and can include employees, contractors, students, and volunteers. Custodians are responsible for their affiliates’ use of Netcare.

Non-custodians, like insurance companies or schools, cannot access Netcare.

To ask for a copy of your Netcare record or ask that errors be corrected:

Your health services provider (if they use Netcare) or
Alberta Health Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Office
P.O. Box 1360, Station Main, Edmonton, AB T5J 2N3
Phone: 780-422-5111  Fax: 780-422-5813
(Toll free access in Alberta, dial 310-0000 then the 10-digit number)

To ask for a copy of your Netcare audit log:

Alberta Health Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Office (as above)

For assistance with concerns about access, correction or protection of health information in Netcare, or questions about the Health Information Act, contact the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta
Phone: 1-888-878-4044
generalinfo@oipc.ab.ca  www.oipc.ab.ca