



Langport Surgery

Modern medicine with traditional values provided
by a professional, caring team

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

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Confidentiality in the Surgery

What you tell us

When you visit the surgery we want you to feel able to discuss anything with your doctor that might relate to your health. This may include sexual matters, your relationships, drugs, drinking, your mental health, your job etc. You may ask for certain information to remain **strictly** confidential.

The General Medical Council, whose rules on confidentiality apply to all doctors in the UK, enforces our duty of confidentiality to all patients. We take great care to ensure that no information you give to us is passed on, either inadvertently or through the deception of others.

Members of your family

If you become ill it is understandable that your partner, family or carer will be concerned about you and may want to talk to the doctor, however the doctor cannot talk to them without your written consent. It may be easier to bring them with you when you come to see the doctor if you are happy with them being present during your consultation.

You are worried about a relative

Sometimes you may be worried about a relative but he or she refuses to see their doctor and you feel it's important the doctor knows of their illness. In such circumstances you can write to the doctor or make an appointment. The doctor will not be able to discuss your relative's medical record with you but may be able to act on the information you have provided. The doctor will not be able to confirm what action, if any, was taken without the patients consent. It is always advisable to tell your relative you are going to talk to the doctor about them.

Young people

If a child under 16 is fully competent to understand and make informed decisions regarding their own health problems, information about that child's medical health or history may not be released to a parent, legal guardian or teacher. Over 18s are considered responsible for their own health.

Releasing information without your agreement

There are a few situations when your doctor is allowed to release information without your consent. *These situations are very rare and are defined by law.* Such information can only be passed on to the relevant authorities if you are:

- Profoundly mentally ill.
- Have serious infections that can be passed on easily to the general public (not sexually transmitted diseases).
- At risk of death or very serious harm.
- Placing others at risk of death or very serious harm.

The doctor would make a judgement based on the individual circumstances before going against your wishes and would always try to discuss this with you first.

Reports for other people

Sometimes you may need a report prepared by your doctor for someone else who is not involved in your care. This may be your employer, an insurance company or your solicitor. We will never release any information to any other party without your written consent. You have the right to see these reports before they are sent off. If you have any worries we recommend you ask to check them at the time.

Access to medical records

You have the right to see your own medical record, both handwritten and electronic. Under GDPR, you cannot be charged a fee to view your medical records or to be provided with a copy of them, but you can be charged for extra copies or for unusual requests. The only time information contained in your medical record may be withheld is if there is a risk it could cause physical or mental harm to either yourself or a third party or it relates to a third party who has not given permission for disclosure. If you would like further details of how to access your medical record please refer to the 'Making a Subject Access Request' leaflet.

Practice Staff

All our staff are highly trustworthy and professional in their attitude to the responsibility that patient confidentiality places on them. Doctors do not discuss their patients with administration staff, but staff may type letters, file incoming hospital post and results and carry out a host of other administrative tasks. Staff are not allowed to access your notes for any other purpose. When staff ask you for details of your illness when you ring to make an appointment they do so to ensure you are booked with the most appropriate clinician. To discuss any aspect of patient information outside work would be considered gross misconduct.

Other professionals

There are times when we have to pass on information about you to other people such as the Clinical Commissioning Group, hospitals, Social Services or the Health and Wellbeing Boards. This is always done confidentially or by removing your identifying details when they are not essential. Everyone working for the NHS has a legal duty to maintain the highest level of confidentiality about patient information and is bound by the same data protection rules. The practice is also registered under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Information to the Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) or NHS England and other health organisations

Some information is sent electronically to the CCG and NHS England. This is mainly statistical information for the calculation of payments to the doctors for their work. Some personal details such as changes of address etc are sent but no clinical information that is identifiable to a particular patient is transmitted. No one outside the building can access the computer or the information that is sent to the CCG or NHS England. The practice is also requested by the NHS to provide data for the clinical audit of certain diseases and conditions. Prescribing information is also requested to help compile statistics on how diseases are treated and the costs involved in treating some illnesses. All such information is anonymous, with no patient identifiable information being passed on.

Computer Security

All persons who can access your record on computer are given a unique password. Different grades of staff have different levels of access. Staff should only have access to those parts of the computer record that they need to do their job. An audit trail of who has used the computer is kept within the computer system with every log-in recorded and identified by the user's password. All computers have anti-virus software loaded, which is regularly updated to protect your medical record.

Test Results

Patients often request test results at the Reception desk. If you wish, please ask for your results to be written down on paper and handed to you as we understand that this is a very public area. If you ask someone to collect your results, please send a signed consent letter. Your results will be given in a sealed envelope. Your results will only be given to you personally over the telephone once we have established your identity.

Data - How your information is used to help you

As part of your treatment, health professionals are required to record details of your condition and the care you receive.

This is to ensure that:

- staff have accurate and up to date information to assess your health needs and decide what care you need in the future
- full information is available should you need another form of care, for example if you are referred to a specialist service
- you have received quality care
- your concerns can be properly looked into if you are unhappy with your treatment

Your information also helps us to plan services for the future and allows us to monitor the way public money is spent.

If you do not want certain information recorded, please talk to the person in charge of your care. If you feel that you are unable to do this, or you are not happy with the outcome, you should contact the Operations Manager at the surgery.

Sharing your information without consent

The guiding principle is that your information is held in strict confidence. However, while we would normally seek your consent to share the information held about you, there are some circumstances where this does not apply. For example:

- To prevent risk to yourself and others
- Investigation or prevention of serious crime
- Control of infectious diseases
- Notification of new births
- Formal Court Order

Keeping your information confidential

Everyone working for the NHS has a legal duty to maintain the highest level of confidentiality. The Practice has a Staff Code of Confidentiality, which means that relevant information is only shared with people involved in your care, who may come from more than one organisation, for example:

- Local NHS Trusts, such as Yeovil Hospital, Musgrove Park Hospital or Community Hospitals or services
- Social Services
- NHS Walk-In Centres
- NHS 111 and Out of Hours GP services

With your consent, information can also be shared with relatives, partners or friends who act as a carer for you. Consent can only be over-ridden if justified through risk or if the law requires it. When information needs to be shared with different organisations, it is passed securely and kept confidential by the people who receive it. We only use or pass on information about you which is necessary for your care and treatment.

Information for managing and planning

Where necessary patient data is shared with other NHS organisations, such as the Department of Health, the local Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS England. This enables the NHS to monitor and plan services according to local population.

The NHS Register for England and Wales contains basic personal demographic details, such as name, address and date of birth, of all patients registered with a General Practitioner (GP).

Data held centrally is not used to make any decisions about the treatment or care you receive from your healthcare provider.

Education and research

Whilst always safeguarding confidentiality, your information can also help us in:

- Training and education staff. You will be asked if you wish to be personally involved. Where appropriate your consent will be recorded in writing.
- Research approved by the Local Research Ethics Committee. You will be asked if you wish to be personally identified or involved.
- Clinical audit and other work to monitor the quality of care provided.

National Data Opt-Out Programme

NHS Digital is developing a new system to support the national data opt-out which will give patients more control over how confidential patient information is used. The system will offer patients and the public the opportunity to make an informed choice about whether they wish their confidential patient information to be used just for their individual care and treatment or also used for research and planning purposes.

Patients and the public who decide they do not want their confidential patient information used for planning and research purposes will be able to set their national data opt-out choice online.

Further information about the National Data Opt-Out Programme can be found on the NHS Digital website (www.digital.nhs.uk).

If you choose to opt out you only need to do this once, and that registration applies to all healthcare settings and organisations, not just general practice. You can do this by using one of the following:

- Online - Patients registering need to know their NHS number or their postcode as registered at their GP practice. Visit the following website: www.nhs.uk/your-nhs-data-matters/manage-your-choice
- Telephone - Call 0300 303 5678 lines are open Monday to Friday between 09:00 and 17:00
- NHS App - for use by patients aged 13 and over (95% of surgeries are now connected to the NHS App). The app can be downloaded from the App Store or Google play
- Print and Post - A printable form can be found on our website. Photocopies of proof of applicant's name (e.g. passport, UK driving licence etc.) and address (e.g. utility bill, payslip etc.) need to be sent with the application. It can take up to 14 days to process the form once it arrives at its destination.

Further information

If at any time you would like to know more about how we use your information you can write to the Operations Manager

*Mrs Charlotte Norris
North Street
Langport
Somerset
TA10 9RH*

Information Commissioner

*Wycliffe House
Water House
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5Af
Tel. 01625 545745*

Further information can be found by reference to the Health and Social care Information Centre website.

This can be accessed at:

www.hscic.gov.uk

This leaflet can be supplied in large print, or can be translated. For more details contact the practice surgery.