



Mercy Health

Care first

ABN 74 762 230 429

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND YOU

What is Freedom of Information?

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 1982 gives you the right to access your information held in Mercy Health records. Mercy Health includes Mercy Hospital for Women, Werribee Mercy Hospital and O'Connell Family Centre. The FOI Act also allows you to amend incorrect information in your records and to request an explanation or a summary of the information.

What information does Mercy Health have about me?

Your medical record at Mercy Health includes health information collected during attendances as an inpatient, outpatient and community visit. The information is used to assist in your ongoing care and treatment. Such information includes details of current and past illnesses or injuries, operations performed, pathology results and medications taken or prescribed.

What types of records are kept?

Your information may be stored in many ways including paper, x-rays, computer systems, film, tapes, electrocardiographs (ECGs).

Where is my information stored?

Recent information will be kept on site at the hospital you were treated. This information is stored in Health Information Services. Information which has not been accessed for a period of time is stored securely off-site and may be retrieved when required.

How long does Mercy Health keep my information?

Mercy Health complies with legal requirements for information retention. Inpatient records are kept for a minimum of 15 years, or longer if the patient was a child when receiving treatment. Outpatient records are kept for a minimum of 7 years from the patient's last date of attendance. X-rays are kept for a minimum of 5 years after creation. Records of deceased patients are kept for 10 years from the date of death. At the end of their retention period, records are destroyed.

How do I view or obtain a copy of my record?

Applications must be made in writing to the FOI Officer, either on an application form, which is available from the FOI Officer, or by letter. Your request to either view the record or to obtain a copy must be clear. Applications must be accompanied by a prescribed fee, as outlined below, and proof of identity (e.g. of driver's licence or passport).

How do I obtain my Adoption Records?

Access to adoption records may be obtained under the Adoption Act 1984. In Victoria, you should contact the Adoption Information Service. The contact details are as follows:

Adoption Information Service
Ground Floor
448 St Kilda Road
MELBOURNE VIC 3004
☎ (03) 9868 7777

Can anyone else request information about me?

Information about you will only be provided to another person if you have provided written authority for them to do so. There may be some exceptions and these are outlined below.

Can I obtain someone else's records?

You may obtain another person's records only if you have the written authority from them to do so.

Alternatively, you may obtain another person's records if you can provide evidence that you:

- Have been named as the Power of Attorney by that person; or
- Have been appointed as the Legal Guardian of that person; or
- Are the Next of Kin (NOK), as per NOK hierarchy outlined below, in the case of a deceased person.

Records may also be made available in accordance with due legal processes, e.g. as evidence in a legal action before a court.

Next of Kin Hierarchy

The nearest relative in relation to a person means the spouse or domestic partner of that person or, where that person does not have a spouse or domestic partner, the relative of the person first listed below who has attained the age of 18 years, the elder or eldest of two or more relatives being preferred to either or any of those relatives regardless of sex:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| A) Son or Daughter | E) Grandson or Granddaughter |
| B) Father or Mother | F) Uncle or Aunt |
| C) Brother or Sister | G) Nephew or Niece |
| D) Grandfather or Grandmother | |

Source: *Guardianship and Administrative act 1986 (section 3 and 37)*

How much will it cost me?

The total charge will vary according to each request. Charges are set by government regulations. You can download a copy of these regulations from www.dms.dpc.vic.gov.au. (Select the Victoria Law Today Library tab. Click both options for 'statutory rules'. Select 'F' for Freedom of Information. Search down the list until you see the option to select on 'Freedom of Information (Access Charges) Regulations 2004' and click on this link). This site will outline all the government regulated charges that apply to Freedom of Information requests. For your information, the standard charges are:

General Costs	
Application Fee	\$22.70
Photocopying	\$0.20 cents per page
Viewing costs (in addition to application fee)	
Viewing/interpretation fee	\$20.00 per hour
Registered Mail Charges	\$5.00
The above fees may be waived for HCC/Pension card holders*	

You must provide a current valid photocopy of your HCC or Pension card to be eligible.
If your application is accepted, you will be excused from paying the above charges.

How long will I have to wait?

Acknowledgement of your application will be sent right away. Mercy Health has 45 days from receipt of your application fee, or equivalent, to inform you of the outcome of your request. At this time you may also receive an invoice for any applicable photocopying charges. These charges must be paid in full before receipt of your information.

Who do I apply to?

Post your application to the hospital or health service at which you were treated:

Mercy Hospital for Women

Freedom of Information Officer
Health Information Services
163 Studley Road
HEIDELBERG VIC 3084

☎ (03) 8458 4169

☎ (03) 8458 4128

✉ FOI@mercy.com.au

Werribee Mercy Hospital

Freedom of Information Officer
Health Information Services
298-310 Princes Hwy
WERRIBEE VIC 3030

☎ (03) 9216 8456

☎ (03) 9216 8622

✉ wmh-his@mercy.com.au

O'Connell Family Centre

Freedom of Information Officer
Health Information Services
6 Mont Albert Road
CANTERBURY VIC 3126

☎ (03) 8416 7618

☎ (03) 9816 9729

✉ vquirk@mercy.com.au