

Important Information About Secure E-Mail for Patients

As a patient, or legally authorized representative of a patient, of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), you may ask that we communicate with you by secure electronic mail (email). It is important that you know:

- About the risks of communicating via secure e-mail with your health care provider and other authorized NIH staff
- How the NIH will use and share provider/patient e-mail, and
- How to update your email address that is maintained in your medical record.

PLEASE READ THIS INFORMATION CAREFULLY

Secure e-mail is two-way communication. This means that there could be a delay between answers and replies. This delay could affect treatment for an acute condition. If you have an urgent or emergency situation, you should not rely on provider/patient email to ask for help or to describe your urgent or emergency need. Instead, use another way to get the help you need.

E-mail may not be secure

1. E-mail accounts obtained through your employer may not be private.

The computer, laptop, or smart phone you use for work may not give you e-mail privacy.

2. E-mail that is not password protected also may not be private.

3. Unsecured e-mail is as private as a postcard—anyone can read it.

Do not communicate with your health care provider or other NIH staff by unsecured e-mail.

4. E-mails can be missed. You can lessen the chance of missing an e-mail by letting your health care provider or NIH staff know which e-mail address you use and check most often.

5. Email is sent instantly; it cannot be cancelled or recalled. No matter how careful you are, mistakes can and do happen during sending.

6. Errors in transmission, regardless of the sender's caution, can occur. Email messages may be accidentally missed or not received due to technical difficulties.

How NIH staff will use and share provider/patient e-mail:

1. Information in e-mails about your medical care will become part of your medical record.
2. When a member of your NIH health care team (or other authorized NIH staff) sends you a secure message, you will an e-mail letting you know that a secure e-mail has been sent to you that you need to review

How to add or update your email address:

1. Electronic communication with your NIH health care team (or other authorized NIH staff) requires your written authorization via the Authorization for Electronic Communication Consent (NIH-2984). This form is completed when you register during your first visit and subsequent inpatient admissions.
2. If you are a returning patient and want to add or change the email address in your record, please complete the Authorization for Electronic Communication Consent (NIH-2984) (<https://clinicalcenter.nih.gov/participate/pdf/NIH-2984.pdf>) and return via mail to:

NIH – Clinical Center
Health Information Management Department
10 Center Drive, Room B1L400, MSC 1192
Bethesda, MD 20892

The form can also be submitted via fax at 301-480-9982 or submitted electronically at <https://cc.nih.gov/participate/medicalrecordrequest.html>.

Or on your next visit, ask your care team for a patient update form to review and update your demographic information.