

Consent for Email Communication

Patient/Caregiver Information Sheet

What is Email Communication for Our Patients?

Email communication allows you to receive important updates, appointment details, and correspondence from Children's Health Queensland (CHQ). It's a convenient, environmentally friendly way to stay informed and ensure timely communication.

Why Use Email?

- **Fast and accessible** – Information at your fingertips.
- **Supports sustainability** – reduces paper use.
- **Timely updates** – no waiting for postal delivery.

Things to Keep in Mind When Using Email

Email is a great way to stay in touch. At CHQ, we are committed to taking steps to protect your information. To help you feel confident when using email, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- **Replies may take time**
While we aim to respond promptly, there may be a short delay before you receive a reply.
- **Messages can be shared accidentally**
Like any form of communication, emails can be forwarded, saved, or sent to the wrong person by mistake.
- **Shared devices may not be private**
If you're using a work, school or shared device, others may be able to access your email messages.
- **Your email may be shared within CHQ**
Sometimes your email will be passed on to a staff member best suited to help with your query.
- **Deleted emails may still exist**
Even after deleting an email, backup copies may remain in the system.

How to Keep Your Email Secure?

- Protect your email account with a strong password.
- Monitor who has access to your email.
- Notify CHQ of any changes to your email address.

Can All Healthcare Staff Use Email?

Not all CHQ healthcare teams use email for communication. Please check with your healthcare team if email is an option for your care.

What Can Be Sent by Email?

Appropriate Email Content

- Appointment details
- General health advice
- Post-consultation summaries (as approved)



Queensland
Government

How to Format Your Email

- **Include in the email body:**
 - Patient's full name
 - Date of birth
 - Hospital unique record number (URN)
- **Use the subject line to summarise the topic, such as:**
 - Appointment enquiry
 - Health update
 - Document required (e.g. School/NDIS)
 - Medication enquiry
 - Referral request
 - General question

Please ensure all communication remains respectful.

Abusive language or behaviour will not be tolerated and may be reported.

When Not to Use Email?

- **Emergencies or urgent matters** – call or visit the health care facility directly.
- **Complex or sensitive issues** – better discussed in person.
- **Other individuals** – do not email about individuals not listed on your consent form.

What Happens After I Send an Email?

- A healthcare professional will respond to your query by email or phone.
- Your email will be added to the patient's medical record.
- Your email may be forwarded to the relevant team for response.
- Contact the healthcare professional's office via alternative communication method (e.g. phone, letter) if a reply is not received within a reasonable period of time.

How Do I Start Using Email?

- Sign the ***Patient Registration and Privacy Consent*** form and/or ***Consent for Email Communication*** form.
- Discuss with your healthcare team what types of communication are suitable for email.

How is My Information Managed?

CHQ complies with privacy laws, including the *Information Privacy Act 2009* and the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011*:

- Emails are securely stored in the patient's medical record.
- Authorised staff may access your information as needed.
- Information may be shared with other healthcare teams or disclosed by law.

What If I Have Trouble Receiving an Encrypted Email?

- **If you are unable to open the encrypted email:** Follow the instructions provided in [Open encrypted and protected messages – Microsoft Support](#).
- **If you can open the email but cannot open an attachment:**
 - Microsoft Office attachments require an Outlook.com or Microsoft 365 account to view.
 - PDF attachments are not encrypted and can be opened using any PDF viewer.
- **If you are still unable to receive or open the information:** Contact your healthcare team. The information may need to be sent by post instead.

Have Questions or Need Help?

If you have any questions or need assistance regarding email communication, please feel free to reach out to the administrative office of the relevant health service or program. They will be happy to provide further information and support to ensure your needs are met.

For any privacy related concerns please contact CHQ_PHAInfoPrivacy@health.qld.gov.au