



ADULT

HEALTH BULLETIN



JANUARY 2017

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS



The days of paper forms and clipboards at the doctor's office seem to be going away. Instead, you are more likely to see a doctor come in with a computer or tablet to record your health information. All of the information that is being entered is going into your Electronic Health Record (EHR) or also sometimes known as the Electronic Medical Record (EMR).

An EHR or EMR is very similar to the paper forms and are used in the same way. It is a collection of your health details. It also has different charts and areas where different providers and staff can find the information needed about you. Because all of this information is electronic, it is much easier to share. This is great news if you have more than one healthcare provider within a facility. If you have to change providers, your records are more easily shared as well.

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If you have any questions about your EHR/EMR, talk to your healthcare provider.

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How does the facility get my information from EHRs/EMRs?

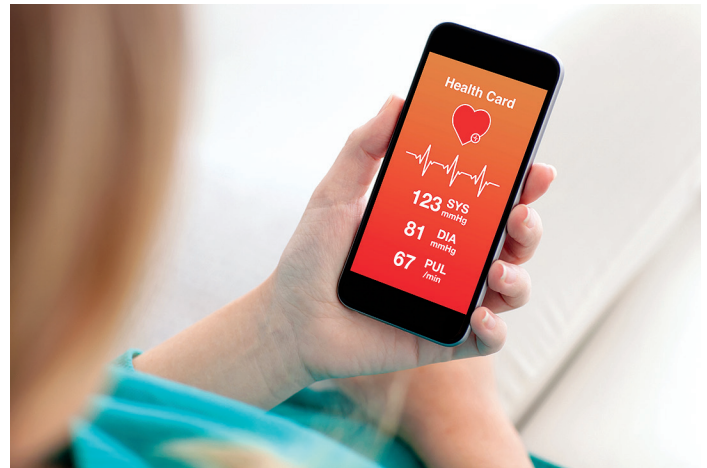
Many providers have their own database that keeps the information. In order to get access, the provider or staff member would have to log into the system with their username and password. Some places use thumbprint identification. For some systems, they also can allow the provider to access the records system remotely, meaning even when they are away from their office.

Are there benefits to EHRs/EMRs?

Yes, there are several benefits to the use of EHRs/EMRs. These include:

- **Stores data safely.** Because the information is made to be digital, it cannot be destroyed the way paper files can. Further, these records cannot get misplaced or misfiled. Once created on the record, pages cannot be removed.
- **Reduces medical errors.** With EHRs/EMRs there is a reduced chance for a misunderstanding or misreading of handwriting. This is good for preventing errors in dosages and alerting for allergies or drug interactions.
- **Saves time.** Through EHRs/EMRs a nurse can enter vitals while the provider is looking over your files. They do not have to wait until one is done before the other can be working on the file. There are also connections to the pharmacy, so prescriptions are moved along right after the appointment and do not have to be called in directly by the nurse.
- **You can see the information too.** You should be able to see your files. Ask for the provider's

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instructions on how to access the files. From your files you can see lab results, provider notes for home care and even check to see if there were errors.

What about privacy?

There are laws that protect your health information and who can have access to it. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) protects information that providers, nurses or staff put into your records. The laws also protect you when providers have conversations about your health and your health care. EHR/EMR people who are entering information into your record only have access to the parts that they need to do their job. Further, if a provider has to send EHR/EMR to another provider, he or she is required to have protective security to limit access to the information to only those permitted.

EHRs/EMRs are becoming more common and they can be a great alternative to paper health records. If you have any questions about your EHR/EMR, talk to your healthcare provider.

SOURCE:

Electric Health Records <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/ehrs.html>

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