



# Connect Care

## Confidentiality in Connect Care

### Patient Confidentiality: Frequently Asked Questions

#### General Information

##### 1. Is my health information private and confidential?

Alberta Health Services (AHS) is committed to protecting your privacy and the confidentiality of your health information.

AHS has implemented information security safeguards and policies to protect your health information in accordance with Alberta's *Health Information Act*. Even though it's required, it's also the right thing to do.

Health care is delivered in a collaborative team environment which requires sharing of patient information. AHS recognizes the importance of sharing information to deliver the best possible care while respecting the rights and privacy expectations of our patients.

Even if you know your information in Connect Care is private and secure, sometimes you may wish for some aspects of it to be treated with additional sensitivity. In these circumstances, Connect Care provides new ways to “mask” or restrict access to specific information. It also offers ways to flag sensitive information or create warnings about disclosure requests. This helps AHS support both your unique health care journey and privacy needs.

##### 2. How does AHS ensure the privacy of my information in Connect Care?

In order to access Connect Care, all AHS staff, physicians, midwives, students, residents, volunteers and contractors must complete a required privacy and information security training course every three years. After training is complete, access to information in Connect Care is enabled if it is required to appropriately do one's job.

AHS has implemented information security safeguards and privacy policies to protect your health information. Access to records is recorded electronically and can be audited. In addition to this, AHS has a “Smart Auditing tool” which uses artificial intelligence to flag access to information which doesn't appear to be appropriate.

##### 3. Who do I speak with if I have a confidentiality concern about how my information is managed in an electronic medical record (EMR)?

Please speak to your healthcare provider. They can help by understanding your concerns and suggesting an appropriate way to address them. There are confidentiality features in Connect Care that can add additional restrictions or warnings to information you identify as sensitive, while ensuring your healthcare team has appropriate access to the best possible information required for your care.

##### 4. Can I limit access to my records through a MyAHS Connect account (which is the new patient portal)?

No, you need to speak with your healthcare provider to determine the best way to address your concerns.

##### 5. Can I turn off access to my health information to certain people?

No, this is not a feature that is available, however, no one can access your health information unless they are authorized to do so. For example, a healthcare provider directly involved in treating your condition would be authorized to access your record, but a nurse on another unit would not be authorized to access it.

## Confidentiality Features

### 6. What if I don't want any information such as appointment reminders and test results, sent to my home?

A **Confidential Address** will send correspondence to somewhere other than your primary or temporary address. Similarly, a **Confidential Guarantor Account** will send your billing statement to somewhere other than your permanent address.

### 7. There are certain people I don't want to see while I'm here. Can I limit who visits me while I'm in the hospital?

A **Visitor Restriction** alert can help prevent unwanted visits or phone calls. You can add a password and give the password to approved visitors.

Note: Staff will make a reasonable effort to ensure visitors are asked to provide a password if one is noted on your record. However, if you have serious safety concerns, please discuss these concerns further with AHS staff member so that appropriate measures can be taken to ensure your safety.

### 8. I'm concerned a coworker who saw me in the lobby will try to visit me and I don't want her to know why I'm here. Is there a feature in Connect Care that can help?

A **Private Encounter** will remove information about your visit from the information desk and will place a warning on your record that you do not want your healthcare team to provide anyone with any information about your location or visit.

Note: This feature prevents anyone from being provided information about your visit. You'll need to remember if you are expecting a visitor or delivery (e.g. flowers), that you will need to provide specific information about your location as it will not be available at the information desk.

### 9. I'm concerned that the information I am sharing for this visit may be accessed by someone who isn't treating me. Can I limit who sees this information?

You can request that your visit is masked (this is called **Encounter Break-the-Glass**). The visit will still appear on your record, but in order to access the details, it will be necessary to first remove the mask or "break-the-glass." Access to the visit information may be subject to additional auditing.

### 10. Can I limit all access to my health information to keep my information private?

AHS requires every team member to maintain your privacy and has established information security safeguards and policies to protect your health information. If you have serious concerns, you can request to be a **Confidential Patient**. In Connect Care, when you are marked as a Confidential Patient, it means that anytime someone tries to access any part of your record they will need to unmask it ("break-the-glass") first. Access to records may be subject to additional auditing. Your location information will always be private, meaning it will always be unavailable at information desks; and, your health information in Netcare will also be masked. The patient should understand that providers may feel nervous about accessing your health record and may not as thoroughly review your health information. For more information about masking in Netcare, refer to the [Alberta Health webpage](#).



### 11. I only want my psychologist to access the information about my visit.

A **Sensitive Note** can be used to limit who can access the note. Only health care providers that work in the same department where you were seen; healthcare providers of the same type as the one who marked your note sensitive; and Health Information Management (Access and Disclosure and Data Collection) will be able to see the note. Of course, no one can access your information unless they are doing so for an authorized purpose.

### 12. I'm concerned about the disclosure of my health information.

A **Release Restriction** alert can be added to your record to indicate your expressed wishes about the disclosure of your information. Note: the request will always be *considered*, but AHS must comply with Alberta's *Health Information Act* when processing requests for access to, or disclosure of, health information.

### 13. I am a minor and I have questions about parental access to MyAHS Connect account.

Discuss your concerns with your healthcare provider to determine what options may be available. It may be appropriate to request that proxy access to your MyAHS account is discontinued as you begin to become more involved and independent in your own health care journey. No specific communication will be sent to the proxy regarding the termination but the proxy may notice the change. Discuss with your healthcare provider how best to address the situation.

## Contact Information

### 14. I have additional questions about privacy and security of my health information. Who do I ask?

If you have questions concerning privacy policies and practices, including concerns about unauthorized access as per the result of an audit log, please contact Privacy at 1-877-476-9874 or email: [Privacy@ahs.ca](mailto:Privacy@ahs.ca). Note: For security and confidentiality purposes, never include any personal health information in an email.

### 15. How do I submit a request for health information?

If you need help submitting a request for health information, including requests for audit logs, please contact Health Information Management at your local hospital or health care centre where you received treatment. If you require further assistance, please contact the Disclosure Help Line via email: [Disclosure@ahs.ca](mailto:Disclosure@ahs.ca).

Instructions to request audit logs specific to Netcare can be found on the [Alberta Health](http://Alberta Health) website. Note: For security and confidentiality purposes, never include any personal health information in an email.

