

Using Technology to Manage Your Health Care



There are a number of technologies available to help you store, share, and analyze your health information. Health information technology (health IT) – which includes tools such as electronic health records (EHRs), personal health records (PHRs), online communities, and mobile applications – can help patients, families, and caregivers better manage their health and lifestyle on their own and in partnership with their doctors and other health care providers.

Health IT enables you and your loved ones to:

- Better understand your health and health care
- Check your medical records or test results
- Access educational resources specific to your diagnoses and overall health status
- Use mobile applications on your smartphone or laptop to manage your health

With health IT, you are able to: (1) **Get** your health care information electronically, without the hassle of carrying around lots of paper, (2) **Check** to make sure the information is correct, (3) **Use** the information to set health goals and change behaviors, and (4) **Share** important information about your doctor visit or lab tests with your primary doctor, specialists, or others you trust as you navigate throughout the health care system.

Get It.

There is a federal law called the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) that gives you rights over your health information, including the right to get a copy of your information, make sure it is correct, and know who has seen it. You have the legal right under HIPAA to see and get a copy of your medical records (called right to access) from most doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers, such as pharmacies and nursing homes, as well as your health plan. If your doctor uses an EHR, you may ask your doctor and other health care providers to give you an electronic copy of your medical record or a visit summary.

Having access to your health information electronically may allow you to:

- Download your information so you have it on the go when traveling, moving, or switching doctors or insurance companies
- Review lab and test results online
- Request medication and prescription refills electronically
- Schedule your doctor and other medical appointments online



Would consider switching to a doctor who offers online access to medical records.

Source: Deloitte Center for Health Solutions 2011 U.S. Survey

Check It.

Patients have the most invested in health and health care. As a patient, you are the expert on your symptoms. You are responsible for making many day-to-day choices that impact your health, such as deciding what to eat, whether to take medications, and when to seek care from the health care system. Health IT provides access to information and tools that can help you be in the driver seat when managing your health and health care. You can:

- Check to make sure your information is correct, such as your address or phone number
- Ensure your medication list is accurate and complete, along with the right dosages
- Manage health care finances and medical claims submitted to your health insurance company

Use It.

More and more providers have started using EHRs to document patient health history and to communicate with patients. Health IT-enabled care delivery helps to improve the quality of care and outcomes for patients. Health IT can empower patients to be active participants in their health care decision-making process.

Having electronic access to your health record online means that you can:

- Communicate and share up-to-date health information with your doctors and other health care providers
- Reference your health history to be reminded of when you had your last shot or the exact date of a procedure
- Follow up with your doctor with questions about what's in your health record, often through secure email
- Make use of mobile and other web-based applications to access specific patient education resources and other e-tools, such as fitness and nutrition apps, that help you better manage your health

27% of Adult Internet Users

Have tracked their weight, diet or exercise routine, or other health indicators online.

Source: Pew, 2010



Share It.

Sharing your health information with your doctor and other medical staff can help make sure everyone has the most up-to-date information about your care. Health IT makes it easy to share your health information with caregivers and loved ones.

Sharing health information electronically can:

- Allow you to choose which family members or other loved ones have access to what they need to know about your illness(es) and/or health condition(s)
- Allow you to take a more active role in your care experience and help you choose your own health care alternatives
- Help facilitate the exchange of information between doctors and patients, and other caregivers as appropriate
- Remotely monitor and keep track of the health conditions of you and your loved ones

Patients who have access to their health information through health IT know more about their health, ask more questions, and take better care of themselves than when their health information was less accessible to them in paper records.

Source: CA Healthcare Foundation

To learn more about health IT and opportunities for patients, visit our website at www.healthit.gov.