GUIDE

# Better and Faster Access

18 December 2025 – v2.0

## Sharing reports with My Health Record by default

Information for healthcare providers who **request** pathology and diagnostic imaging services


Background ..... 2

What is 'Share by Default'? ..... 2

Who helped to inform these changes? ..... 2

Upload requirements ..... 3

Who will be required to upload information to My Health Record by default? ..... 3

Are there any exceptions to the upload requirements? ..... 3

Considerations for providers ..... 4

What does this mean for providers who request pathology or diagnostic imaging services? ..... 4

Do providers who request tests need to do anything differently? ..... 4

Is patient consent required to view and upload to a patient's My Health Record? ..... 5

Results ..... 6

When can healthcare providers view results in My Health Record? ..... 6

When can patients view their results in My Health Record? ..... 6

Who can decide that results should not be uploaded to My Health Record? ..... 7

Can a patient control access to their reports? ..... 7

Is there any guidance for patients about their results? ..... 7

Information for your patients ..... 8

Supporting patients to understand Pathology Results ..... 8

Printable resources for your waiting rooms ..... 8

Further links and resources ..... 8

Contact us ..... 8

# Background

The Australian Government is making changes to provide better and faster access to pathology and diagnostic imaging reports in My Health Record. The changes have been introduced in response to recommendations of the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce Report, to modernise primary care and were announced in May 2023 by the Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Ageing. These changes also respond to patients' demands for improved access to and greater control over their health information, to enable them to more effectively manage their health.

## What is 'Share by Default'?

Historically, healthcare providers were not required to upload health information to My Health Record. That is now changing. The *Health Legislation Amendment (Modernising My Health Record—Sharing by Default) Act 2025* was passed into law in February 2025 and provides a framework for key health information to be shared to My Health Record by default

The requirement to upload information to My Health Record by default applies to healthcare services and record types that are prescribed in the Health Insurance (Share by Default) Rules 2025 and the My Health Record (Share by Default) Rules 2025—collectively referred to as the Share by Default rules.

### *Better Access*

Pathology and diagnostic imaging providers will be the first healthcare providers required to share test results to My Health Record. These changes will ensure patients and their healthcare providers have better and faster access to key health information when and where it is needed.

While the legislation will not come into force until July 2026, it is already driving information sharing, for example, as at September 2025, around 4 million pathology and 400,000 diagnostic imaging reports are uploaded weekly to My Health Record, with more than 1.4 million weekly views by patients. This represents a significant increase and the growth in uploads and views is continuing.

## Who helped to inform these changes?

A committee known as the Clinical Reference Group was established by the Agency and the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing to provide strategic advice and clinical oversight to support safe implementation of these reforms. It had 24 members from relevant peak bodies, professional associations, consumer groups (including people with lived experience) and other stakeholders involved in pathology and diagnostic imaging services. It was chaired by prominent clinicians from the Agency and the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care.

# Upload requirements

## Who will be required to upload information to My Health Record by default?

Initially, the requirement to share to My Health Record by default will apply to written pathology and imaging reports prepared by (or on behalf of) a pathologist or radiologist. The requirement does not include images.

In the future, if the Minister decides that additional health information should be shared with My Health Record by default, other healthcare providers may be affected by this change. The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing will undertake further consultation prior to introducing additional requirements.

The legislation makes the following changes to the *My Health Records Act 2012* and the *Health Insurance Act 1973*:

- Under the *My Health Records Act 2012* healthcare providers and the organisations they work for, who deliver particular health services, can be required to upload specific health information to My Health Record. Initially, requirements will only be made for pathology and diagnostic imaging services and they will only apply to written reports about the results.
- Under the *Health Insurance Act 1973*, in order to claim Medicare benefits, healthcare providers who deliver particular health services must upload health information to My Health Record after they deliver a service. If the organisation the healthcare provider works with uploads information for them, this will meet the new requirements. Initially, requirements will only be made for pathology and diagnostic imaging services and will only apply to written reports about the results.

## Are there any exceptions to the upload requirements?

Under the legislation, there are certain circumstances when information does not need to be uploaded to My Health Record by default, because one of the following exceptions apply:

- The patient does not have a My Health Record
- The patient requests that the information is not uploaded to their record
- The patient's authorised or nominated representative requests that the information is not uploaded to My Health Record
- The information cannot be shared due to circumstances outside the reasonable control of the provider, such as an unplanned system outage or technical issue.
- A healthcare provider reasonably believes that the information should not be uploaded because of a serious concern for the health, safety or wellbeing of the patient.

Healthcare providers who are required to upload test results to My Health Record will be required to keep records for a period of 2 years, if they do not upload because one of the above exceptions applies.

A provider does not need to upload to My Health Record by default if an extension of time to comply has been granted or preserved privacy laws apply (under selected state or territory legislation that is prescribed in the *My Health Records Act 2012* for this purpose).

In addition, the rules specify that sharing is optional for

- pathology and diagnostic imaging reports that are generated for the purpose of workplace drug or alcohol testing, court ordered testing or law enforcement
- pathology testing that relates solely to research and clinical trials (where the pathology reports are not otherwise provided to the patient or their healthcare providers).

# Considerations for providers

## What does this mean for providers who request pathology or diagnostic imaging services?

My Health Record is a secure online summary of key patient health information. Healthcare providers can access the system to view and add information. While it is not a complete health record, it can be used to supplement other sources of information about a patient. When a provider accesses a result in My Health Record, they will continue to have the option to save a copy in their local information system.

When information is included in a person's My Health Record, it is available to all providers involved in a person's care. This helps to overcome information gaps that can occur, when people receive health and care services in a variety of different settings, move from one geographical location to another, or undertake extended travels across Australia.

The requirement to share pathology and diagnostic imaging reports to My Health Record will help to bridge this gap by enabling providers to view results that have been ordered by another member of a person's treating team. Better access to this information will make it easier for healthcare providers to coordinate care and make well-informed clinical decisions.

## Do providers who request tests need to do anything differently?

### *Check My Health Record for recent results*

Before ordering a pathology or diagnostic imaging test, providers can check a patient's My Health Record to see whether any relevant results are available. This can help to inform whether additional diagnostic tests are required, reduce unnecessary repeat tests and minimise delays in treatment.

### *Patient conversations*

When requesting pathology or diagnostic imaging tests, providers should be mindful that patients may choose to access their results in My Health Record. In some cases, they may view their results before they return for a follow-up appointment.

There are opportunities for providers to partner with their patients as active participants in monitoring their health, particularly when they are living with a chronic condition.

In addition, providers should consider:

- Proactive discussion – before ordering a test, consider whether the results may be complex, unexpected or sensitive. Where appropriate, explain to the patient that their results will likely appear in their My Health Record shortly after their test or scan. Let them know what to expect, including that some results may be difficult to interpret without context and resources are available.
- Managing expectations – Explain that a follow-up consultation with the requesting healthcare provider is the best way for them to understand their results, as they can provide context based on the patient's own medical history, social factors and clinical circumstances.
- Guidance on receiving results – offer clear advice about what patients should do once they see their results, particularly if any values fall outside of a normal range. Reassure them that not all abnormal results are cause for alarm, and that healthcare providers will continue to contact them directly if urgent action is required. Where applicable, discuss how the results can help them manage their ongoing conditions.

If a healthcare provider has a reasonable and serious concern that uploading a report to My Health Record will be harmful to the health, safety or wellbeing of their patient, they can decide that a specific result will not be uploaded to My Health Record. This decision should be made in consultation with the patient, where possible.

*Processes to support handling of results*

It is important for providers to ensure that they are familiar with, and follow, critical results management processes for their organisation. These may be set by professional colleges, peak bodies or state and territory guidelines. Providers should not rely on My Health Record as the primary communication method for abnormal results—they should continue to follow up with patients in accordance with current organisational processes.

Providers should consider:

- Timely review – ensure robust workflows are in place for prompt review of all incoming pathology and diagnostic imaging results. This should include processes for critical results management and follow-up.
- Completeness of request forms – to facilitate efficient communication and follow-up, it is recommended that request forms for pathology and diagnostic imaging include all relevant aspects of a patient's history, together with accurate contact details and clear follow-up details.

## Is patient consent required to view and upload to a patient's My Health Record?

In most cases, it is not necessary to obtain a patient's consent to upload pathology and diagnostic imaging. However, there are a number of things to be aware of, which are summarised below.

Under the *My Health Records Act 2012*, staff members authorised by a healthcare organisation can access, view and upload information to a patient's record for the purpose of providing that patient with healthcare, and provided it is in accordance with any access controls. In addition to clinicians, a healthcare organisation may authorise other staff to access the system as part of their role in healthcare delivery.

Healthcare providers must comply if a patient requests that information not be uploaded to My Health Record. If a patient requests this, the healthcare provider should inform the patient that Medicare information relating to the clinical encounter may be visible in My Health Record, as this is uploaded by Medicare. If the patient does not want this to be included, they will have to remove or manage access to that information themselves by logging into their record via myGov, or they can call the My Health Record helpline for assistance with this (1800 723 471). This is particularly relevant where the information may be regarded as sensitive.

Generally, there is no need to obtain a patient's consent to upload information to My Health Record, except where requirements under a state or territory law are recognised in the My Health Records Regulation 2012. These laws require consent, if the information relates to HIV (ACT, NSW, QLD), notifiable conditions (ACT, QLD), contagious conditions (QLD), environmental health events (QLD) and perinatal history (QLD).

# Results

## When can healthcare providers view results in My Health Record?

Healthcare providers can access pathology and diagnostic imaging results in My Health Record as soon as they are uploaded.

## When can patients view their results in My Health Record?

### *Pathology*

Since October 2025, patients have been able to view most pathology results as soon as they are uploaded to My Health Record. A list of test categories that will be available for immediate access by patients is available on the Agency's website.

For certain test categories (including anatomical pathology, cytopathology and genetic tests), patients will be able to see their results 5 days after they are uploaded to My Health Record.

If access to a result is delayed this does not indicate an adverse result—the delay will apply irrespective of whether the result is positive, negative, within or outside normal range. A link to Pathology Tests Explained is available within My Health Record to help patients learn more about pathology tests.

### *Diagnostic imaging*

From March 2026, patients will be able to view x-ray reports for limbs (arms and legs) immediately after they are shared to My Health Record. They will be able to view other diagnostic imaging reports 5 days after they are uploaded. Prior to this date, results will be available 7 days after upload.

### *History*

Until recently, pathology and diagnostic imaging reports in My Health Record were not available for patients to view until 7 days after they were uploaded. During the past few years, changes to this policy have been made to enable patients to access some results without delay. Initially, this resulted in immediate access for diabetes-related pathology (HbA1c), anti-coagulant monitoring tests known as the International Normalised Ratio (INR) and respiratory infection test results (such as influenza, RSV and COVID-19). These changes were well received, with patients requesting immediate access to more of their results.

A similar approach is being adopted within a number of jurisdictional and private sector health services that also provide patients with immediate access to their results.

### *Ongoing review and future changes*

Over time, the Agency will continue to refine and adjust access settings for pathology and diagnostic imaging reports. Our governance approach includes ongoing advice from a committee of clinicians, health sector representatives and those with lived experience (patients and carers).

## Who can decide that results should not be uploaded to My Health Record?

At any time, a patient can request that information is not uploaded to their My Health Record. Healthcare providers must comply with a request from the patient, or their authorised or nominated representative.

In addition, if a healthcare provider has a reasonable and serious concern that uploading particular information to My Health Record will be harmful to the health, safety or wellbeing of their patient, they can decide that a specific result will not be uploaded to My Health Record. This decision should be made in consultation with the patient, where possible.

Where a decision is made to not upload specific information to My Health Record, this should be communicated to the pathology or diagnostic imaging provider and the reasons should be recorded in the provider's notes. In addition, the provider that is subject to the requirement to share to My Health Record by default must keep a record of the reason for not uploading, for a period of 2 years.

## Can a patient control access to their reports?

If a result is uploaded and a patient later changes their mind, they can delete it, hide it from view, or restrict access to the result or their entire record, in accordance with access controls set by the patient. Healthcare providers should keep this in mind and remember that My Health Record is not a complete health record and should be used to supplement other sources of information.

## Is there any guidance for patients about their results?

A link to Pathology Tests Explained is available within My Health Record to help patients learn more about pathology tests and provides simple, clear information to help patients understand the test and what the result might mean.

## Information for your patients

### Supporting patients to understand Pathology Results

- Pathology Tests Explained

### Printable resources for your waiting rooms

*Posters*

- Now uploading reports to My Health Record (with QR code) – for pathology and diagnostic imaging

*Brochure and flyers*

- Consumer guidance – Your reports in My Health Record – A4 fact sheet and tri-fold brochure

## Further links and resources

*Australian Digital Health Agency*

- Better and Faster access to health information
- My Health Record for healthcare providers
- Implementing My Health Record in your healthcare organisation
- Pathology and diagnostic imaging providers uploading to My Health Record
- eLearning courses for healthcare providers
- 1800MEDICARE app

*Department of Health, Disability and Ageing*

- Modernising My Health Record – Improved sharing of pathology and diagnostic imaging information

## Contact us

- Visit the Contact us page of our website or email help@digitalhealth.gov.au