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## Keeping Copies of Important Medical Records

Keeping copies of your medical records is always a good idea. It is even more important if you have cancer. Cancer treatment can be complicated, and you may see several cancer care providers. And after treatment, you will likely be sent back to a primary care provider.

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If you've been treated for cancer, there are certain pieces of information that you should keep copies of:

Pathology reports from all of your biopsies and surgeries.

There are three main types of electronic records:

**Electronic health records (EHRs)** are controlled by the health care organization or provider. More than one organization may use the same system, but each will have their own access point. If you see providers in more than one organization who use the same system, you may be able to share your information between these organizations. This is not the case if health care organizations use different systems.

**Personal health records (PHRs)** are used by individuals to manage their own health information. PHR's may be part of a health care provider's EHR. Other people choose to use a separate electronic application to store and manage their personal health records.

**Electronic medical records (EMR)** are used by medical offices to hold the medical information for their patients. Patients are not usually able to access the information in an EMR.

## How should I keep copies of my medical records?

Many people prefer to keep printed copies of their medical records. That way they can share copies with a new health care provider. Other people like to keep their medical records electronically – either as files on their computer, tablet or phone, other electronic devices, or in a personal health record (PHR).

No matter how you store your medical records, be sure that they are kept private and secure. Printed copies of your medical records should be kept in a safe place. PHR's that are part of an EHR are protected by federal laws to make sure they are kept private and secure.

## Hyperlinks

1. [www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/survivorship-care-plans.html](http://www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/survivorship-care-plans.html)
2. [www.cancer.org/cancer/financial-insurance-matters/managing-health-insurance/managing-health-insurance-when-someone-has-cancer.html](http://www.cancer.org/cancer/financial-insurance-matters/managing-health-insurance/managing-health-insurance-when-someone-has-cancer.html)
3. [www.healthit.gov/topic/protecting-your-privacy-security](http://www.healthit.gov/topic/protecting-your-privacy-security)

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Johns Hopkins Medicine. Medical Records: Getting Organized. Hopkinsmedicine.org. Accessed at <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/medical-records-getting-organized> on September 20, 2022.

Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. Adoption of Electronic Health Records by Hospital Service Type 2019-2021, Health IT Quick Stat #60. healthIT.gov. Accessed at <https://www.healthit.gov/data/quickstats/adoption-electronic-health-records-hospital-service-type-2019-2021> on September 20, 2022.

Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. Office-based Physician Electronic Health Record Adoption, Health IT Quick-Stat #50. healthIT.gov. Accessed at <https://www.healthit.gov/data/quickstats/office-based-physician-electronic-health-record-adoption> on September 20, 2022.

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US Department of Health and Human Services. Personal health records and the HIPAA privacy rule. hhs.gov. Accessed at <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/special/healthit/phrs.pdf> on September 20, 2022.

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