

eMail Medical Communication
Informed Consent

I am engaging in email communication with my physician realizing that, because there is no way to absolutely secure any electronic exchange of information, the probability of compromise of confidentiality of personal medical information is substantially increased compared to face-to-face information exchange. As such, email communication on personal medical matters should be as limited as possible and reserved for situations not practically allowing for face-to-face communication, but in which the failure to timely inform the patient or their agent on personal medical issues could significantly compromise the patient's best interests and outcome.

Notwithstanding the above, email communication should, as much as possible, avoid discussion of highly sensitive medical matters that could be, in the event of an information leak, deleterious personally or publicly to the patient and/or their agents. Such topics best avoided are medical disability, sexually transmitted diseases, substance abuse, psychiatric conditions, prognoses (medical outcomes), end-of-life conditions or prognostications, disclosure of demise of an individual, and any other matter that reason could suggest might result in unpredictable emotional distress or reaction in the recipient and possibly lead to behavior harmful to the recipient or others. In a word, remote communicating is a minimally controlled circumstance and information exchange should be minimal, brief, of limited purpose, and absolutely necessary. Language used should be careful, deliberate, and avoid "emotionally charged" terms.

Email medical communication is a temporary convenience and intervention, not a substitute for proper face-to-face medical encounters. Habitual, ongoing use of email for communicating medical information is to be discouraged and avoided in the best interests of medical professionals and patients and their agents.

By signature, I indicate I have read the above content and policy of my healthcare providers and I agree to abide by the principles and spirit set forth in this document. I further understand the risks and limitations of transmission of medical information communication electronically, and so release from all and any liability my healthcare provider for any unauthorized disclosure or leak of such information inadvertently to parties outside the intended senders and recipients of such communications. I will not hold responsible the sender of medical information by email for any delays in receiving such communications and resulting harm from such delays. I am aware that when communicating from the workplace some companies consider email "at work company property", and such messages may be monitored and read by the company's officials. Furthermore, email sent to your home may be intercepted by others. Email sent to your doctor's office, though directed to a specific individual, may be read by other than the designated recipient since all incoming messages in a medical facility must be reviewed timely, including when a staff member is absent for any reason. Finally, communicating by email always exposes both parties to the risk of computer software virus invasion which can jeopardize and destroy databases and software. By signing this, I release from any liability for damage from computer viruses my healthcare providers and their staff.

I also release my healthcare provider with whom I am communicating voluntarily in medical matters by email from any adverse effects such information has on me or my agents that might have been otherwise avoided or lessened by exchange of such information in face-to-face encounters. Taking all of the above into consideration, I wish to engage in email communications regarding my personal medical information or that for which I am a responsible agent. I have had an opportunity to ask questions on all the aforementioned and provide by consent freely.

PATIENT (PRINTED)

MEDICAL STAFF (PRINTED)

PATIENT (SIGNATURE)

MEDICAL STAFF (SIGNATURE)

PATIENT'S AGENT (PRINTED)

DATE

PATIENT'S AGENT (SIGNATURE)

Medical Email Facts

1. Email is NOT appropriate for medical emergencies or pharmacy medication refills.
 - a. Issues requiring urgent or immediate attention are NEVER HANDLED BY EMAIL.
2. Expect turnaround time for response to emails to be 1-2 business days.
3. When sending emails ALWAYS,
 - a. Include the SUBJECT of your message on the subject line.
 - b. Include your NAME AND PHONE NUMBER at the end of the message.
4. RECEIPT of our encrypted email to you will be automatically acknowledged.
5. All emails from you WILL BE FILED IN YOUR MEDICAL RECORD.
6. Such topics best avoided are medical disability, sexually transmitted diseases, substance abuse, psychiatric conditions, prognoses (medical outcomes), end-of-life conditions or prognostications, disclosure of demise of an individual, and any other matter that reason could suggest might result in unpredictable emotional distress or reaction in the recipient and possibly lead to behavior harmful to the recipient or others.
7. We will always, in all communications that include your personal health information, attempt to adhere to principles of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), as stated in our Notice of Privacy Practices (see attached), but the use of email in communications introduces technical factors and potential information leaks that are beyond our control, and for which we cannot be responsible.

Patient Signature

Patient Printed Name

Date