



# MEDICAL RECORDS AND MEDICAL RESEARCH

How research using medical records helps improve the health of your community

As a Mayo Clinic\* patient, you have an opportunity to contribute to research by authorizing the use of information from your medical record.

## What is medical records research?

Medical records research involves the use of information from the medical record. This type of research is very important to improve health and health care for you, your family, and your community. Physicians and scientists are able to study how diseases progress and how to stop them. Physicians can also see which treatments and surgeries work best.

Sometimes medical records research requires sharing of information with outside research partners that have been approved by Mayo Clinic.

## What is “authorization”?

Minnesota law requires that Mayo Clinic ask patients for permission before using their medical records for research. This is called “authorization.” The law applies to all medical records created after January 1, 1997.

Therefore, Mayo Clinic makes every effort to obtain authorization. We want patients to be informed about how medical information is used. Research using information from medical records benefits everyone in the community.

Enclosed is a form that we invite you to review and sign. Every adult Mayo patient is given this form. If you are a parent or guardian, you can sign for your children.

When signing this form, you may give authorization to use your medical record for research or decline authorization.

Whatever you decide, Mayo Clinic will honor your wishes. Your current or future care at Mayo Clinic will not be affected by your decision in any way.

## How would my medical record contribute to research?

Research using information from medical records has advanced health and health care for over 100 years. Mayo Clinic has pioneered the use of health records for research.

When physicians and scientists collect information from medical records, they study large groups of people over long periods of time.

Mayo Clinic researchers are actively investigating conditions such as cancer, heart attack, infections, and dementia. For example, one Mayo Clinic study found that exposure to anesthesia during a Cesarean delivery does not put children at a higher risk of developing learning disabilities. Other studies have shown immunizations to be safe and effective.

By authorizing the use of your medical record for research, you will play a role in improving health and health care.

## How is the confidentiality of my health information protected?

Protecting your confidentiality is very important to Mayo Clinic. Medical record information is used only by approved researchers. Mayo Clinic observes the highest level of security standards for its computer systems.

Sometimes Mayo Clinic shares information with research partners outside of the Clinic. Mayo Clinic will only share your information with an outside research partner that observes the same standards of security and confidentiality.

This authorization covers the use of medical record information for research only. Mayo Clinic will not provide your medical record to your employer or your insurance company without your permission. Only anonymous information is published in medical journals.

**Can I find out if my medical record information has been used?**

You have the right to ask us how to contact the researcher who has received information from your medical record and the date information was released.

**What will happen if I do not return the form?**

Minnesota law requires that Mayo Clinic ask patients for authorization to use their medical record for research.

Mayo Clinic provides two opportunities for patients to make a decision. If you do not respond to the first request, Mayo will send you a second letter. If you do not respond to the second request, Mayo Clinic is allowed by law to use your records for research.

**If I do not authorize the use of my record for research, can I still participate in other research studies?**

Yes. We may contact you about other opportunities to participate as a volunteer in a research study. At that time, you can decide whether to say yes or no.

**I have misplaced my return envelope. Where should I send my form?**

You can send your completed form to the following address:

Records Management  
Mayo Clinic  
200 First Street SW  
Rochester, MN 55902-9813  
United States of America

**What if I have other questions?**

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this in more detail, call (507) 293-3550. More information is also available at: <http://www.mayo.edu/records>

You can change your mind at any time. Write us a letter at the address below stating your wishes.

CCaTS - Research Authorization  
Mayo Clinic  
200 First Street SW  
Rochester, MN 55905

*Thank you for considering this request for authorization. Information from medical records plays a vital role in research. It is simply not possible to conduct research without the contributions of patients like you.*