



MedLIS

National Medical Laboratory
Information System (MedLIS)

Information Leaflet

New system for laboratory tests – faster and easier access to test results

We are starting a new system that will mean the results of your laboratory tests will be available in one place. We are first setting the system up in Beaumont Hospital. It will later be available throughout the country.

Under the new system, whenever you have a test done by your GP (family doctor) or hospital consultant in a publicly funded hospital or clinic, the results will be stored on the new system. The new system is called the National Medical Laboratory Information System (MedLIS).

This means that healthcare professionals in these settings will be able to see what tests you have had. MedLIS will speed up getting the results of tests and give whoever is treating you a full picture of your health history.

In this booklet, we explain how the system will work for both patients and healthcare professionals.

What is the National Medical Laboratory Information System?

The National Medical Laboratory Information System (MedLIS) will store test results for each patient in one place. MedLIS will allow healthcare professionals to access patient laboratory information 24/7 at different healthcare sites.

It will also mean:

- Online ordering of tests
- GPs can now quickly order patient Laboratory tests
- Less duplication of tests
- Improved sample tracking
- Better quality information

The MedLIS system will be available in all HSE funded laboratories nationwide. It will allow both hospitals and GPs to order tests electronically.

Each patient will have a unique identifier (a number) that will be associated with their tests. Only healthcare providers who have a legitimate reason for access will be able to see your information. All access will be fully traceable and will be done in line with data protection guidelines.

Which hospitals will use MedLIS?

Publicly funded hospitals will use MedLIS. The system will first be put in place in Beaumont Hospital and later rolled out nationally.

Who has legal responsibility for MedLIS?

The people who are legally responsible for MedLIS are data controllers as detailed in our data protection law.

They will include:

- the HSE
- publicly funded hospitals
- MedLIS data controllers, for example, GPs



Patient Information

What patient information will be held on MedLIS?

We will store your unique identifier (number) so your laboratory tests can be processed. Each test you have had, and its result will be kept on MedLIS so there will be a complete record of any tests you've ever had processed by the system.

We will also store relevant clinical details as these may affect how your laboratory tests are interpreted.

We will ask you to keep us up to date about any relevant changes.

For example, we ask you to tell us if you change your:

- name
- address
- phone number

Who will ask me for consent?

Your healthcare provider is responsible for getting consent (agreement) from you in relation to your medical tests and MedLIS.

Who will have access to my information and why?

All those responsible for processing your laboratory samples need access to your information. This means they can correctly process your samples and give your results to those who need to deliver your healthcare.

For example, the healthcare professionals and the hospital administrative staff will have access to your information on MedLIS. They include for example, people responsible for:

- Preparing reports for hospital consultants
- Scanning documents
- Photocopying or printing documents for other consultants
- Processing information when you change GP

These professionals and staff must also comply with the law to treat your information with care and confidence.

Other times your MedLIS information may be shared

In certain situations, healthcare professionals may share your information with staff from other healthcare facilities, or other people. The following are examples of when your information may be shared.

Transferring from one hospital to another

We may share your information if you are transferred from one hospital to another hospital or to another type of healthcare facility.

To get a second opinion

The healthcare professionals treating you may wish to seek advice about your treatment from other healthcare professionals based at another hospital or healthcare facility. They may share your information to do so.

This is routinely done at multidisciplinary team meetings. These are meetings where the relevant specialists agree on the diagnosis (where a medical condition is identified) and the best treatment.

After care

As part of your treatment and care, you may need support at home, like a visit from a public health nurse or social worker. Your information may be shared with these healthcare providers.

Notifying your doctor

Your GP will receive a summary of your treatment and care after you have left hospital. This is called a discharge notification.

Notifiable diseases

The law says we must notify the Health Protection Surveillance Centre if you are diagnosed with a notifiable infectious disease.

Private health insurance

If you are a private patient, we can share relevant information about you with your health insurance provider. This will allow payment claims to be processed.

Order of a court

We can share your information in response to a court order.

How will my sample and information be processed?

Pathology laboratories work in networks. This means your sample may sometimes be analysed at a neighbouring hospital laboratory rather than the nearest hospital.

Pathology is the study of disease, its origin, nature and development.

Not all pathology tests can be processed in your local or regional laboratory, so your sample may be sent to a specialist laboratory for analysis. This may involve sending samples to other HSE, independent sector or overseas laboratories.

Laboratory staff carry out groups of blood tests to check a person's general health and the results are reported back to the doctor(s). Occasionally, these tests may give unexpected results. If anything unexpected is found, this is reported to the doctor(s) looking after you and the GP or hospital consultant will explain what your results mean to you.

Sometimes, the results from one test may automatically alert your healthcare providers that you need another test. If so, pathology specialists may carry out these tests to help your doctor look after you appropriately.



Will my information be used for any other purposes?

In certain circumstances, personal information (including health information) can be legally shared. For example, it can be shared:

- to comply with the Laboratory Infectious Disease Regulations
- with the National Cancer Registry of Ireland.

Training healthcare staff

The quality of patient services depends on the training, teaching, audit and research of junior doctors, laboratory and healthcare workers by laboratories and others.

Our laboratories are part of the Faculty of Pathology and CORU Training Programmes in Ireland.

Part of these programmes will involve work in the laboratory and analysis of test results which may be yours.

Education purposes

Hospital clinical staff may present patient case histories as part of their continuing training and education, but your identity would not be revealed in these situations.

Relevant health information

In other situations other doctors within the hospital or HSE may need to know about your particular clinical conditions. In these cases, your information would be used as needed to provide you with the highest level of care.

For other purposes

If your information is to be used for anything outside your health needs, we must first get your consent to do so.

Plan national services

We may also use patient information, including yours, to help plan and assess:

- laboratory services
- staffing
- other resources

Plan your treatment

We may also use your information to:

- help plan and provide your treatment and care
- communicate with your healthcare provider during your treatment and care

When you are being referred

We may use your information to make sure appropriate information is available if you need to be referred to another:

- healthcare professional
- part of the health service

Compare your tests

We may use your information to:

- compare differences in your laboratory results over time
- keep a single record of your laboratory information
- keep a full record of all our work

We may keep all patient information so that we have a full patient laboratory record. This may be used by interested parties if, in relation to our services, there are any:

- complaints
- investigations
- concerns

Interested parties include solicitors acting on the patient's behalf.

We may only use your name with your permission

We will only attach your name to information if you give us your signed consent. For example, we may ask for your permission to do so if requested by:

- insurance companies
- solicitors

Using your information for other purposes

Some hospitals and laboratories take part in healthcare research outside their own settings. When this happens, information is shared only when the relevant ethics committee gives formal approval of the research proposal and if you give your signed consent. An ethics committee usually gives formal ethics approval for a research proposal if all ethical requirements are met. This means that your data is protected and your name/identity will not be published.

If you are asked to take part in external healthcare research, you will be informed who gave ethics approval for the research and what your involvement in the research would mean in terms of the safety of your information. You can then decide to take part or not.

How long will my information be on the MedLIS system?

We will keep your information in line with professional and clinical guidelines. We will always follow HSE policies in relation to keeping information. Each hospital will make sure that personal data (information) is uploaded to MedLIS in line with professional guidelines.

These are outlined in the 'Retention and Storage of Pathological Records and Specimens' guidelines on the Royal College of Pathologists website www.rcpath.org and in the 'HSE National Record Retention Policy' on www.hse.ie.

Where will my information be stored?

We will store your information on the MedLIS database. The HSE manages the MedLIS system. The HSE network meets international standards for data storage.

Will you keep my information confidential?

We will do everything possible to keep your information secure on MedLIS. The database meets the most modern security standards designed to protect against outside attacks.

Everyone who uses MedLIS must comply with Irish and European data protection laws. When independent companies and overseas laboratories are processing tests, they must also comply with the same confidentiality standards as any HSE laboratory. This is part of their contract with the HSE.

All access to MedLIS is managed in line with the HSE Access Control Policy.

Each hospital will make sure that anyone who has access to personal data stored on MedLIS will only handle it when they have a legitimate reason. This includes hospital:

- employees
- contractors
- data processors
- agents (such as technology specialists who update and test computer software)
- representatives (such as legal representatives working on behalf of HSE)

Hospitals will do this by having individual usernames and passwords in place. They will also keep track of every time the system is accessed by anyone. Hospital personnel will receive training in:

- GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)
- the confidential nature and responsibilities placed on those processing such information
- MedLIS
- how the system is checked
- disciplinary action that staff may face if they don't keep confidentiality

Can I get a copy of my information?

We recommend that you discuss this with your GP who will explain the information on MedLIS about you.

Or, you may prefer to ask for a copy of your information held on MedLIS about you. You are entitled to do this using the Freedom of Information Acts, Data Protection Acts or the General Data Protection Regulation. You will find information about these on www.hse.ie

If you received your treatment and care at a HSE hospital and you wish to ask for a copy of your information, you can find more about this on the HSE website.

If you received your treatment and care at a voluntary hospital you can contact that hospital directly to ask for a copy of your information.

Can I correct mistakes on MedLIS?

If you believe some of the information kept about you on the MedLIS system is incorrect, you can ask to have it corrected. You can contact the relevant hospital where you received your treatment and care and ask them to correct it.

Can you delete my data if I ask you to?

Your information, unless incorrect, should never be deleted (permanently removed) from your chart. This is to make sure that healthcare can be provided for you based on complete and accurate information.

MedLIS

If you would like more information
about MedLIS, please visit

www.hse.ie/medlis

or scan QR code below

