

This information is forwarded by the **Love Thy Neighbor Ministry** at Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church, Milton FL.
Source of Information: The Catholic Foundation of Northwest Florida. Due to the many references, some may not be current but have many useful reference sources. Emails are sent using the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) method.

This quality of life series focuses primarily on senior citizens plus other supplemental information. You do not have to be a Senior to make use of this information. If you know of a Senior, a parishioner or a neighbor who could use this information you are invited to give them a copy of this email. Fellowship through improved communications is guided by the second greatest commandment. Sometimes an act of kindness can be as simple as a phone call, a visit, or receipt of an email.

Suggestion: Create a separate folder of this information for ease of future reference.

For information about our Parish, click on the following link: <http://parishesonline.com/scripts/HostedSites/Org.asp?ID=14423>

Our parish spirit is rising, is rising.

How to Keep Your Own Medical Records

http://www.legacygifts.org/savvy_senior.jsp?WebID=GL2004-0129&D=200823

Dear Savvy Senior,

To keep up with all the different doctors I see and medications I take, a friend recently suggested I start keeping my own medical records at home, but I'm not sure where to start. Can you offer any tips or suggestions on the best way to go about doing this?
Unorganized Annie

Dear Annie,

Keeping a set of your own personal health records is a great tool to help you get a better handle on your own health care, as well as avoid possible medical errors. Here are some tips to help you get started.

It's a fact that the more doctors you see, the more medical files you have. And the more scattered your medical records are, the higher your risk of drug errors, missed diagnosis, and other dangerous glitches. The solution is to keep a set of your own records at home. And with all the self-help tools available today, it's easier than it sounds.

Helpful Tools

Today there are literally dozens of websites, computer software and paper-based products (some are free while others charge) that can help you gather your medical information, create your health records and keep them updated. Having your own health history at your fingertips can ensure better, more coordinated care. To find a listing and links to all the different kinds of electronic and paper based self-help tools, visit www.myphr.com and click on "Tools and Resources," then click on "PHR Tools and Services."

Getting Started

To start your personal health record, you'll need to request a copy of your health records from all your healthcare providers, including your general practitioner, plus your eye doctor, dentist, and any other specialists you have seen. Find out if your records are in an electronic format you can access or request paper copies.

Once you have your paper records in hand, keep them together in a file folder or binder so they're easy to find. Organize the information in a way that makes sense to you but mark it clearly so it makes sense to others as well. And be sure your loved ones have access to it if you become incapacitated. If your records are stored electronically (on your computer or a website), be sure they know where to find it and have any necessary passwords for access.

After you've created your personal health record, be sure to take it with you to all doctor appointments and remember to keep updating it. To make your electronic health records portable there are a number of handy USB flash drives (like www.medkey.com, www.emrystick.com, www.vitalkey.com) that are about the size of a house key that can hold your medical records and be updated easily.

What to Include

Here's a checklist of what should be included in your personal health record:

Personal information: name, contact info, birth date, Social Security number.

Emergency contacts including phone numbers.

Physicians, dentists, other specialists. Include addresses, phone numbers.

Health insurance information.

Living will, medical power of attorney, advance directive.

Organ donation authorization, if any.

List and date significant illnesses or surgeries. You could request and include a copy of your "discharge summary" from each hospital where a surgery took place.

Current medications and dosages.

Immunizations and dates.

Allergies or sensitivities to drugs.

Hereditary conditions in your family; important dates, *i.e.* father died of heart attack at age 50. See www.familyhistory.hhs.gov.

Results of recent physical exam.

Opinions of specialists you saw.

Important test results; dental and eye records.

Correspondence with your health care providers.