Your Health Information Is Protected By Federal Law. Health information technology (Health IT) allows comprehensive management of medical information and its secure exchange between health care consumers and providers.

Most of us believe that our medical and other health information is private and should be protected, and we want to know who has this information. The Privacy Rule, (HIPAA) a Federal law, gives you rights over your health information and sets rules and limits on who can look at and receive your health information.

The HIPAA Privacy Rule and Health IT


The Privacy Rule applies to health plans, health care clearinghouses, and those health care providers who conduct electronically certain financial and administrative transactions that are subject to the transactions standards adopted by Health and Human Services (HHS). The Privacy Rule requires covered entities to protect individuals’ health records and other identifiable health information by requiring appropriate safeguards to protect privacy, and by setting limits and conditions on the uses and disclosures that may be made of such information. The Privacy Rule also gives individuals certain rights with respect to their health information.

Cleveland Clinic’s Commitment

As a top academic medical center, Cleveland Clinic is committed to the innovative application of health information technology (HIT) to improve the ability of clinicians to deliver cost-effective healthcare of the highest possible quality to every patient. Using a comprehensive HIT system, Cleveland Clinic virtually aligned all of our physical locations, physician expertise, and nursing and care team skills into a single, coordinated group practice. We also provided our patients with secure, online connectivity tools to ensure that they are well informed, and actively engaged in the decisions regarding their care. The result is an integrated healthcare system that may serve as the model for the 21st century.

HIT systems will play an important part in healthcare reform by increasing operational efficiencies, decreasing errors, and connecting all the healthcare professionals involved in a patient’s care into virtually coordinated care teams. To maximize the benefit of HIT systems, they must be adopted in a systematic fashion
that will create an integrated healthcare delivery model capable of serving the needs of every American by:

- Providing patients the secure online tools they need to proactively manage their care
- Enhancing communication between patients and their physicians
- Empowering patients through information to more fully participate in the decisions related to the care they receive

While more and more physicians are adopting HIT system in their practices, less than 25 percent currently use it in some form or other.