

Lab Results Online via My Personal Records

What is MyHealth Records (MHR)?

MyHealthRecords (MHR) is the single access point for Albertans' personal health information using their verified MyAlberta Digital ID username and password. Through this website, Albertans can access the following tools:

- My Personal Records (MPR),
- MyAHS Connect, and
- COVID-19 Children's Lookup Tool (for parents/guardians).

Who is eligible for MHR?

MHR is available to Albertans that are at least 14 years of age and have an Alberta-issued Driver's License or Alberta-issued Identification Card with an up-to-date address.

What is My Personal Records (MPR)?

My Personal Records is an online application that allows Albertans to access their key personal health information derived from Alberta's provincial electronic health record, Alberta Netcare. Information currently available includes immunizations, dispensed medications from pharmacies and about 70 different lab results, including COVID-19 test results. MPR also allows users to track and manage their health and wellness data and to share their information electronically or to print reports. The Province continues to expand the information available to Albertans in MPR.

What is MyAHS Connect?

Albertans who are patients of Alberta Health Services (AHS) and have visited an AHS facility that is using Connect Care can use MyAHS Connect to securely access their AHS Connect Care record. Connect Care is AHS' Clinical Information System that maintains the AHS record of care. Using MyAHS Connect, AHS patients are able to view their lab and diagnostic imaging results and to interact with their Connect Care healthcare team. Parents or guardians of AHS patients under 18 years can see the minor patient's MyAHS Connect record via a proxy access after it is enabled by an appropriate AHS provider.

What is changing in MHR?

In 2021, Albertans will be able to view more lab test results in MPR. These results are viewable as soon as they are released by the lab:

- About 95% of the most commonly-ordered (by volume) lab test results will be viewable by February 1, 2021.
- All remaining lab tests, including more complex results in microbiology, pathology and genetics, will be available in MPR by July 1, 2021.

A list of the specific tests that will be viewable in MPR is available [here](#).



Why is this change being made?

This change is being made to provide Albertans with more access to their health information, and as an additional safety net for patient care within the system. This change has been approved by the Health Information Executive Committee, which has representatives from Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services, Alberta Medical Association, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta, Alberta College of Pharmacy, Alberta College of Family Physicians, College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta, Primary Care, and the Public.

Have other organizations and jurisdictions in Canada made this change?

Many organizations and jurisdictions, including British Columbia and Ontario, immediately release all information to patients, resulting in high patient satisfaction. Releasing results immediately has shown increases in patients' level of engagement and sense of empowerment regarding their own health (BC Excelleris Study, *Impacts of direct patient access to laboratory results, 2015*). While it is reasonable to expect that immediate release of some test results will cause patient anxiety, it is important to recognize that the waiting associated with an unknown results also causes anxiety, and that receiving high-stakes tests results during a visit does not give a patient time to prepare. Advice from patient advocates is that the pros of immediate test results outweigh the cons.

What lab results will be displayed in MPR?

Lab results ordered from all sites in Alberta, including labs ordered during inpatient and emergency visits, will be included in MPR.

Will lab results be released retroactively?

Once the changes are in place, new users will see an 18-month retrospective view of any lab results slated for release. Existing users will not have labs added retroactively, but they will be able to see the expanded lab results moving forward.

What is the difference between MPR and MyAHS Connect with regard to viewing test results?

MPR users will see incorporated lab results, including hospital results, immediately upon release.

AHS has adopted the following test results release strategy:

- Most test results are released to MyAHS Connect immediately.
- Tests of higher sensitivity and all DI and all pathology are released with a 5 day delay.



When should I advise my patients to use MPR vs MyAHS Connect for reviewing results?

Many lab test results will be viewable in both MPR and MyAHS Connect.

- Albertans age 14 and over, who have a valid Alberta Driver's Licence or an Alberta Identity Card, will be able to set up an MPR account. Only patients that have been set up through contact with an AHS provider using Connect Care will have access to MyAHSConnect.
- MPR users will have to check within MPR to see if results are available. MyAHS Connect users will receive notification when new results are present.
- MyAHS Connect allows the patient's Connect Care team to comment on their lab results within MyAHS Connect. AHS-affiliated providers can view detailed information regarding MyAHS Connect functionality [here](#).

Ultimately, patients that have access to both portals may choose to view their results in either one.

How will making these lab results available via MPR affect providers?

After the changes, patients will have immediate access to more of their own information. Most studies of direct lab results release to patients show minimal change to workload for providers. However, providers may notice some changes in their patterns of work. For example, they may receive fewer calls from some types of patients, but more calls from others. Alberta Health will raise awareness and educate Albertans on MyHealth Records registration, technical support and whom to contact for interpretation of their results and health records.

Do I need to change how I talk to patients about lab tests before I order them?

Yes, you may need to consider giving patients more information about the implications of different results when initially ordering a test. A small investment of time up front discussing expected results may save you and your clinic staff future work. For example, you may wish to let a patient know that a PSA result that is high on a screening test would not necessarily mean they have cancer. Similarly, if ordering the same PSA in a post prostatectomy patient, you may wish to let them know that the expected result is near zero, and that a "normal" range result is actually abnormal for them.

Patients may already have requisitions for lab tests that will be completed after February 1. These patients will not be able to benefit from pre-test counselling and consideration of how best to manage their concerns is needed.

What if a patient is asking me about test results that I did not order?

The ordering provider has the responsibility for reviewing results and addressing them with the patient. Unless specific arrangements have been made with another provider, responsibility for lab follow up resides with the ordering provider. Providers will have to use their discretion when answering questions about tests they did not order. If it is in their scope of practice and they are certain what the interpretation of the result is, they may choose to communicate this to the patient. If there is any doubt about the meaning of the results, or if the provider is uncomfortable discussing these results with the patient, then the patient should be directed back to the ordering provider for additional information or interpretation.



Will labs be available to providers as quickly as they are to patients?

Physicians and other providers will continue to have access to results information through their usual channels. In some cases, patients may have access to their results before the provider receives them, particularly if the provider relies on paper or fax delivery. Through information visible on the MPR website and via the MHR Support Line (1-844-401-4016), patients will be advised that providers may not have access to results on the same schedule they themselves do. Patients will be informed that providers may not see results until their next clinical day and will be connected with 811 for clinical questions that cannot wait.

Providers should make clinic operating hours available, for example on an answering machine or a public website.

All results available to patients through MHR will also be available on Alberta Netcare for providers to review, should the need arise.

Will providers be alerted if their patients sign up for MyHealth Records?

Not at this time. Currently, when Albertans sign up for MyHealth records, user consent is not obtained for MyHealth Records to share this information with providers.

Providers who use Connect Care can see an icon that shows if a patient has MyAHS Connect.

What additional supports are available to providers and patients?

Alberta has created the MyHealth.Alberta.ca web site, a trusted source of health information. Clicking on a link in a test result in MPR will bring up a clinical abstract about that test from MyHealth.Alberta. MyAHS Connect also has some direct links into the MyHealth.Alberta.ca site, or patients can search it themselves.

Albertans can also call the MyHealth Records Support Line at 1-844-401-4016, where they can choose from the menu options to connect to:

- The support team for technical assistance between 8:15am – 4:30pm (MT) Monday - Friday (excluding weekends and statutory holidays); or
- Health Link - 811 available at all times 24 hours 7 days a week to talk with health professionals about any health-related inquiries including test results.

Callers who reach a technical team agent asking health related questions will be advised to call 811.

Where can I learn more about MHR?

For more information on MHR, visit [MyHealth.Alberta.ca/mhr-features](https://myhealth.alberta.ca/mhr-features).

