

Guidelines for Electronic Communications

Atrium Health takes the privacy and security of our patients' information seriously. Emailing and texting information is effective and convenient but can be risky. Review these *Guidelines* about the risks of electronic communication.

Remember: Electronic communication is **not** a substitute for personal treatment or other medical care. Atrium Health cannot guarantee that emails or texts will be read and responded to within any specific time.

Call 911 in an emergency or contact your provider in person or by phone for other time-sensitive issues.

If you provide your email or your cell phone number, you agree that we may communicate with you by email or text subject to certain restrictions, you accept the related risks, and you release us from liability related to those communications. **We reserve the right to direct you to communicate with us through our secure patient portals.**



Communicating by email or text has some risks, which you accept if you email or text us. For example:

- Emails and texts can be intercepted, changed, forwarded, stored, or used without your permission.
- Emails and texts can be accidentally sent to the wrong address or recipient.
- Unencrypted messages are not as secure as encrypted messages. If you send us unencrypted emails or texts, you understand there are security risks in doing so and you accept those risks. We will rely on the email address or phone number you provided to respond to your message.
- We are not responsible for the security and confidentiality of an email or text once it leaves our control, including what you do with it, what happens to the information both in transit and upon arrival, and who else sees the information.



You are responsible for the privacy and security of your communications, email accounts, and devices.

You should protect your passwords, logins, devices, and accounts. Avoid using public computers and public WIFI (like internet cafés or libraries) to communicate private information. The [ONC](#) and Federal Trade Commission ([FTC](#)) have resources that include helpful information about protecting your information.

Atrium Health will never email or text you and ask for your password.



There may be limits on what information we provide to you electronically.

For example, we may not be able to honor requests to electronically communicate sensitive information, such as sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, mental health, developmental disability, or substance use.



We may place your electronic communications in your medical record.

We may also forward them to other providers for your care or to our staff and agents as necessary for treatment, payment, or operational purposes.

**You agree to release Atrium Health, our locations, commissioners, officers, employees, agents, and representatives from all claims, liability, damages, costs, and fees relating to the electronic communication of your information, including unauthorized access or other issues related to choices you have made or direction you have given us.*

Please check back on our website, www.AtriumHealth.org, for updates to these *Guidelines*.