



*Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Drop-In Article on Personal Health Records (449 words)*

**Did Your New Year's Resolution Include
Taking Better Care of Your Health?**

A message from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

When was the last time you had your cholesterol checked? Does your mom's medication interact with ibuprofen...or is it acetaminophen? When exactly *was* that surgery – 1992 or 1993?

With a Web-based personal health record, or PHR, you can answer these questions anytime and anywhere you have access to the Internet.

Most people see more than one doctor and fill more than one prescription. They're treated in a doctor's office, outpatient facility or at a clinic – often for a single episode of care. Doctors may only treat you for one condition and may not know what other doctors have advised regarding your health. Remembering all the facts to share with your doctors can be confusing and difficult. A PHR can help you provide your doctors with a complete picture of your health and the information they need to give you the best care. It may lessen duplicate tests and medical errors. Taking control of your health is easier with a personal health record.

A PHR keeps your medical information at your fingertips without the hassle of shuffling through papers. Personal Health Records are a safe and confidential way to store and track your health history and other important medical information in one place. Once you log on to your individual PHR account, you can fill in diagnoses, medications, test results, doctor visits – any health-related information you think is important. By printing information from your PHR, you can provide a more complete picture of your health when visiting your doctor – and possibly avoid duplicate tests. With a PHR, you choose whether to share access to your PHR account with your doctors, family, or other caregivers to help coordinate your health care and have vital information available in case of emergency.

A variety of PHRs are available on the Web. Some are free; others are available for purchase or by subscription. The features, security and privacy policies vary between PHR companies, so it is important to compare them carefully when selecting one so your information stays safe. Medicare provides information about PHRs, some things to consider when looking for a PHR and even links to special PHR projects sponsored by Medicare in certain states. Visit www.medicare.gov/phr to learn more.

PHRs make it easier to monitor your health and the health of a loved one. They can reduce paperwork and help your doctors provide the right care for you. And, if – like a lot of us – you're resolving to live healthier in 2009, you'll find that keeping this resolution is a whole lot easier when you start keeping a personal health record.