

## How PRIVACY and ACCESS to your PATHOLOGY RESULTS is managed in Australia

You can find more information in the RCPA website under the tabs Library/Fact Sheets/Fact Files. 'How privacy and access to your pathology results is managed in Australia'.

### Choose the full version:

[https://www.rcpa.edu.au/  
getattachment/60f0600b-ec2d-4b70-aad4-  
9acda8cfaa79/PRIVACY-and-ACCESS-  
PATHOLOGY-RESULTS.aspx](https://www.rcpa.edu.au/getattachment/60f0600b-ec2d-4b70-aad4-9acda8cfaa79/PRIVACY-and-ACCESS-PATHOLOGY-RESULTS.aspx)

### OR the summary version:

[https://www.rcpa.edu.au/  
getattachment/9a1eeebb-02b5-442b-8354-  
526ba73ee910/PRIVACY-and-ACCESS-to-  
PATHOLOGY-RESULTS-in-Austral.aspx](https://www.rcpa.edu.au/getattachment/9a1eeebb-02b5-442b-8354-526ba73ee910/PRIVACY-and-ACCESS-to-PATHOLOGY-RESULTS-in-Austral.aspx)



### Reference:

OAIC 11 - [https://www.oaic.gov.au/  
agencies-and-organisations/app-guidelines/  
chapter-12-app-12-access-to-personal-  
information#refusing-to-give-access-under-  
app-12-agencies](https://www.oaic.gov.au/agencies-and-organisations/app-guidelines/chapter-12-app-12-access-to-personal-information#refusing-to-give-access-under-app-12-agencies)

Medicine is Pathology 

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 **RCPA**  
The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia

About **500 million pathology tests** are performed in Australia every year. This means a lot of **personal and health information is collected by pathology laboratories for different reasons** such as making sure you have the **right pathology tests** and to make sure your **pathology results are delivered to the right person and place.**

**Pathology laboratories take your PRIVACY and healthcare rights very seriously**, even though they don't always need your permission to collect, use or share your information. There are **laws and privacy acts** that protect your personal and health information, and pathology laboratories must follow these as well.

**Correctly identifying you** by collecting personal information before you have a pathology test is very important. When your pathology results are ready they **must be delivered to the right person and place in a secure way.** There are many ways pathology laboratories make sure this happens **to protect your privacy.** For example, the doctor who requested your pathology tests can only access your pathology results online if they have a **unique password and login.**

You may be interested to know that **you don't own your pathology results**, but you are **usually** allowed to see them. (OAIC 11)

There are **laws about who else can see your pathology results**, and pathology laboratories take these very seriously. Not even a relative who is a doctor can see your pathology results unless they are also your treating doctor.



There are **rules that protect ACCESS to your pathology results** when you are in hospital, and **rules about how long your pathology results are kept** by pathology laboratories.

**Access** to your pathology results is also **protected after you die.**

It is important to realise that some of the **privacy and access rights** for pathology results are a bit **different for genetic test** results. This is because you **share your DNA with your family.**

**The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights outlines seven rights** that you also have in Australia's health system. You have the right to:

1. have access to health care
2. receive safe and high quality care
3. be shown respect, dignity and consideration
4. be informed about services, treatment, options and costs in a clear and open way
5. be included in decisions and choices about your care
6. privacy and confidentiality of your personal information
7. comment on your care and have your concerns addressed. (ACSQH 1)