

THIN Data Collection

The staff at this practices record information about you and your health so that you can receive the right care and treatment. We need to record this information, together with the details of the care you receive, because it may be needed if we see you again.

We may use some of this information for other reasons, for example, to help us protect the health of the general public generally, to plan for the future, to train staff and to carry out medical and other health research for the benefit of everyone.

We are currently involved in research studies for which we provide anonymised information from patients' notes. The risk of you being identified from this information is extremely low as all directly identifiable details (name, address, postcode, NHS number, full date of birth) are removed from your notes before they are collected for research, and automatic programs to de-personalise any free text (non-structured or coded data) are run after the information is collected. Individual patients' records are added to a much larger anonymous database, containing records from millions of patients across the UK. This information is used by researchers outside this practice. The database to which we contribute anonymised records is known as The Health Improvement Network (THIN). This data may be anonymously linked to other data, such as hospital data. This database is managed by a company outside the NHS which does not have access to your personal details, only to anonymous medical records. The data is used for research into such topics as drug safety, disease patterns, prescribing patterns, health economics and public health. Many of these studies provide useful information to medical staff on diseases, the use of drugs or outcomes of disease or treatment.

These studies may be performed by academic researchers or commercial companies amongst others. However, no researcher has access to your full details such as your NHS number, name and address, initials or your full date of birth. The researchers are not given information about the GP nor the practice name, address or postcode.

If you would like to opt out of this data collection scheme, please let your doctor know and no data from your records will be collected for use in research. This will not affect your care in any way.

For a list of published research using the THIN database please email Michelle Page at michelle.page@visionhealth.co.uk.

If at any time you would like to know more, or have any concerns about how we use your information, you can speak to Lauren Hoadley, Practice Manager on 0208 744 0220.