What are the benefits of a Personal Health Record?
Having a personal health record can be a lifesaver, literally. In an emergency you can quickly give emergency personnel vital information, such as a disease you’re being treated for, medications you take, drug allergies, and how to contact your family doctor.

You can share information with your care providers and manage your health between visits. For example, a personal health record enables you to:

- **Track and assess your health.** Record and track your progress toward your health goals, such as lowering your cholesterol level.
- **Make the most of doctor visits.** Be ready with questions for your doctor and information you want to share, such as blood pressure readings since your last visit.
- **Manage your health between visits.** Upload and analyze data from home-monitoring devices such as a blood pressure cuff. And remind yourself of your doctor’s instructions from your last appointment.
- **Get organized.** Track appointments, vaccinations, and preventive or screening services, such as mammograms.

Source: mayoclinic.com

Types of PHR formats

**Paper:** forms and files

**Personal Computer:** PHR Programs with electronic forms, scanned documents, CDs or flash drives

**Internet:** allows emergency access from anywhere.

**Hybrid Personal Computer/Internet:** information on computer is transferred to an internet account in the event of an emergency.

Sources of PHRs

- Employer Sponsored
- Insurance Sponsored
- Provider Sponsored
- Independent Products

Free Personal Health Record
http://www.webmd.com/phr

Reviews of Products
http://www.phrreviews.com/

At a minimum, a Personal Health Report should contain the following elements:

- Personal identification: name, birth date, and Social Security number
- Next of kin or people to contact in case of emergency
- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of physician, dentist, and specialists
- Health insurance information
- Living wills and advance directives
- Organ donor authorization
- A list and dates of significant illnesses and surgeries
- Current medications and dosages
- Immunizations and their dates
- Allergies
- Important events, dates, and hereditary conditions in the family history
- Recent physical examination
- Opinions of specialists
- Important tests results
- Eye and dental records
- Correspondence with provider(s)
- Permission forms for release of information, surgeries, and medical procedures

Source: Ahima.org
How Can You Use Your PHR?
You can play a more active role in your healthcare.
Research has shown that when consumers actively participate in their own care, the outcomes are better. Use your PHR to assist with decision-making when it comes to potential health conditions, treatment options, costs of treatment, management of chronic conditions, healthy lifestyle choices, preventive actions and monitoring the accuracy and security of your health information.

How Does a PHR Work?
Did you know that every time you see a doctor, visit a hospital, clinic or health care facility, a record of your personal health information is kept?
The information at the provider’s site is compiled into what is known as your medical health record and is protected under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, also known as HIPAA.

It is important to understand that PHRs – which generally are not part of a provider’s electronic health record – are not considered legal health records and therefore are not covered by HIPAA.

Chances are you have a lot of different medical records. You may see many different healthcare providers during your lifetime such as a family practitioner, an allergist, a specialist such as a cardiologist, and if necessary, a surgeon. Each of these providers compiles a separate file of information about you. In fact, even if your providers are all part of the same health care system, they may each keep a separate medical record for you and may not be aware of the other treatment you are receiving. This can lead to an incomplete and disconnected record of your health. This is why your PHR and how you use it is important.

Personal Health Reports
Keep track of your personal health information to play a more active role in your health care and improve outcomes.

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