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**Share medical information
electronically?**
Only with your permission!

Sound healthcare with sound information

Illnesses, an injury or an accident often come out of the blue. You may therefore find yourself seeing an unfamiliar doctor or going to a different pharmacy or an out-of-hours GP service. In such cases it is important for your healthcare provider (such as a GP or pharmacist) to be able to gain fast and easy access to your most important medical information. That way they quickly gain a clear impression of your medical situation. And you are given the healthcare you need. For that reason healthcare providers would like to be able to view your medical information by electronic means. Also in the evenings and at the weekend. To do this they use a special secure network: the network of 'het Landelijk Schakelpunt, LSP' (the national switching point). This network makes it possible to quickly and reliably share information.

Your healthcare provider is subject to a duty of confidentiality. He is not automatically allowed to use the LSP to share your medical information with other healthcare providers. Your GP and pharmacy will first need your permission to make your medical information available. And other healthcare providers are only permitted to view your information if necessary for your treatment. This leaflet explains how you go about giving permission. And it gives you the answers to important questions about sharing medical information electronically via the LSP.

How do you give permission?

Your GP and pharmacy will ask for your permission. They will then note in your medical record whether you have given permission. In some cases you will be in contact with several doctors or assistants at a GP practice or a pharmacy. They can request your permission via one of them. You can also contact your GP and pharmacy yourself. With effect from 1 January 2013 your GP and pharmacy are not permitted to provide access to your medical record via the LSP without your permission. If you have not given permission, healthcare providers will not be able to view your information in emergencies either.

You can give permission and also withdraw it at any time. You can also have certain information in your medical record screened off. More information about this is given under the questions and answers.

How the LSP works

Your GP and pharmacy each keep your information on file. This information is important to your treatment. Your GP keeps medical records of your health problems and the treatment he has given you, for instance. And your pharmacist notes in your medical record which medicines he has dispensed to you and whether you are allergic to certain medicines.

If you have given permission to your GP and pharmacy, they are allowed to make your most important medical information available to other healthcare providers. Examples include a stand-in GP at the out-of-hours service, another pharmacy or a



medical specialist. If you go to a different healthcare provider, that provider will be able to view your information.

Healthcare providers can be given access to information electronically via a network made especially for this purpose: the LSP. This is a secure network to which GPs, pharmacies, out-of-hours GP services and medical specialists in the Netherlands can connect their computer systems.

If your GP or pharmacy is connected to the network, they will ask for your permission to share your information. If you give your permission, they will register your citizen service number ('burgerservicenummer, BSN') with the network. If a healthcare provider then calls up your information, your BSN is used to find out who has provided information about you. That healthcare provider is then able to view your most important medical information. This is only possible if you have given permission and this is necessary for your treatment.

The network only contains your BSN and which GP and pharmacy hold information about you. Your medical information is therefore not stored in the network. It remains in the computer of your own GP and pharmacy. Other healthcare providers are only able to view the most important information in your medical record. Your GP or pharmacy keeps your medical record up-to-date. That ensures that the latest information about your health is available, and you can have any mistakes rectified.

Questions and answers

The sharing of medical information via the LSP concerns personal information. It is therefore important for you to be clear about what you are giving permission for. The most important aspects of this are set out in these questions and answers.

1. If I give permission, who will be able to view my information?

Only GPs, stand-in GPs (out-of-hours service), pharmacies, hospital pharmacies and medical specialists are able to use the LSP. Only these healthcare providers are able to view your most important medical information. That is only allowed if you have given permission. And if it is necessary for your treatment. Health insurers, employers and company doctors therefore do not have access to your medical information. Other healthcare providers such as psychologists or physiotherapists cannot view your information via the LSP either.

2. Which information can the healthcare provider view?

Healthcare providers that are affiliated with the LSP are able to view your personal details, such as your name, address, date of birth, age and sex. They can also see a list of the medicines you take. A stand-in GP can also retrieve a summary of the GP's medical record. This record contains:

- your current health problems;
- which medicines you use;
- known allergies;
- information about contact with you during the past four months or five contacts;
- particulars that are important to a stand-in GP.

3. How secure is the sharing of medical information via the LSP?

To guarantee your privacy, use of the network is security protected in various ways:

- Healthcare providers cannot join the network as a matter of course. The healthcare provider's computer system has to meet strict security standards, for example.
- A healthcare provider is only given access to the network with a special pass and a password.
- You must first give permission for your healthcare provider to make your medical information available.
- Only the healthcare providers who are treating you are allowed to view your information.
- Viewing your information must be necessary for your treatment.
- Use of the network is kept under close supervision. The network logs who has viewed which information and when. This makes it possible to carry out checks at all times.



Despite all of these measures, it is not possible to completely rule out the chance of attempts being made to abuse the system. The fact that use of the network is closely monitored does however mean that any abuses are quickly detected. The protection of your medical information is provided for by the Dutch Personal Data Protection Act (*Wbp*) and the Dutch Medical Treatment Contracts Act (*WGBO*).

4. Can I find out who has registered and viewed my information?

Yes, you can. The network logs which healthcare providers have made your information available and which healthcare providers have retrieved it. If you want to know this, complete the viewing form at the website of the Vereniging van Zorgaanbieders voor Zorgcommunicatie, VZVZ ('association of healthcare providers for healthcare communication'), www.vzvez.nl. A summary of the healthcare providers that have registered and retrieved your information will then be sent to your home address. You can also obtain a viewing form via the VZVZ information centre, telephone +31 (0)70 - 317 34 56.

Do you want to know which information about you your healthcare provider shares? If so, ask your healthcare provider to view your medical record. That is your right.

5. If I give permission, can any GP or pharmacy view my information at any time?

Healthcare providers are only permitted to view your information if necessary for your treatment. And only healthcare providers affiliated to the network of the LSP are able to retrieve your information via this network.

6. Can I find out whether my GP or pharmacy is connected to the LSP?

At www.vzvv.nl/informatiepunt you will find a list of all healthcare providers who are connected to the LSP. Here you can find out whether your own GP and pharmacy are connected.

7. How do I give permission?

Your GP and pharmacy will ask for your permission. This can be done verbally or in writing. They will then note in your medical record whether you have given permission. You can also contact your GP and pharmacy yourself. In some cases you will be in contact with several doctors or assistants at a GP practice or a pharmacy. They can request your permission via one of them. For children up to the age of 12 you can give permission as parent or guardian. Permission for children between the ages of 12 and 16 must be given both by the parent and the child.

8. Can I withdraw my permission after giving it?

Yes, it always remains possible to withdraw your permission. You can do this with the GP or the pharmacy to which you have given permission. You can also let the VZVZ know that you want to withdraw your permission. The VZVZ will then arrange the withdrawal of your permission. For more information see www.vzvv.nl or call the VZVZ information centre, telephone +31 (0)70 317 34 56. If you do not give permission, other healthcare providers will not be able to view your medical information via the LSP. Not even in emergencies.

9. Can I screen off certain information in my medical record?

Yes, you can ask your GP or pharmacy to screen off certain information in your medical record. Healthcare providers will not be able to see this information when they call up your record. Do you want to have certain information screened off? If so, you can discuss this with your GP or pharmacy.

10. If I do not give permission, does that mean that no medical information about me will be shared at all?

Your healthcare provider is only allowed to make your information available to be viewed via the LSP with your permission. If you do not give permission, the LSP cannot be used for that purpose. Your information can also be shared in other ways, such as via regional networks. Your healthcare provider can give you more information about this.

11. I have lodged an objection to the national EPD (electronic medical record) in the past. Is there anything else I need to do?

If you have lodged an objection, there is nothing you need to do. Your medical information cannot be viewed via the LSP. Neither has this been possible without your permission since 1 January 2013.

12. My information is already being shared via the LSP. Will I still need to give my permission?

Yes, your permission is required. With effect from 1 January 2013 your GP and pharmacy are not permitted to give other healthcare providers access to your information without your permission. If you do not go to your GP or pharmacy before 1 January, you can contact your healthcare provider yourself or give your permission at a later date.

For more questions and answers see www.vzvez.nl.

Your rights in the healthcare system

Your rights include:

- giving permission for your information to be shared electronically via the LSP (see question 7);
- withdrawing your permission (see question 8);
- knowing who has registered and viewed your information (see question 4);
- viewing your information yourself (see question 4);
- deleting or screening off information (see question 9);

For websites and telephone numbers see under 'More information'.

Responsibility

In recent years work has been done on the introduction of the national electronic medical record (landelijk elektronisch patiëntendossier, EPD). Up until 1 January 2012 the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport was responsible for this. This responsibility has now been transferred to the VZVZ. The VZVZ has decided in consultation with the patients' federation NPCF to continue the secure sharing of medical information via the LSP without the government's support. Your healthcare provider and the VZVZ each have their own responsibility for the sharing of your medical information via the LSP.

Responsibility of the healthcare provider

Your healthcare provider is responsible for your medical record. He is also responsible for having your information made available via the LSP and must obtain your prior permission for this. Your healthcare provider must always treat your information carefully and confidentially.

Responsibility of VZVZ

The VZVZ is responsible for the sharing of medical information via the LSP. The VZVZ also ensures that the network works properly. That means, for example, that healthcare providers are only able to view the information needed for their professional grouping. A GP can view a summary from your GP medical record, for example, but a pharmacist cannot. The VZVZ also ensures that the network logs who has registered information and who has retrieved it.

Want to be kept informed?

The sharing of medical information via the LSP will continue to develop in the years to come. Other types of healthcare provider, such as para-medics and other members of the emergency services may also be able to use the LSP in the future. You can sign up for a free email service at www.vzvv.nl. You will then receive messages about important changes.

More information

Would you like more information about giving permission? Or would you like to know which information your GP or pharmacy is making available? You will find more information at www.vzvv.nl. You can also contact your healthcare provider.

Do you have any questions about the LSP?

If so, contact the VZVZ information centre, telephone +31 (0)70 317 34 56, email informatiepunt@vzvv.nl. Or go to www.vzvv.nl.

Do you still have questions after consulting your healthcare provider? Would you like more information about your rights as a patient? If so, contact the healthcare line of the patients' federation NPCF, telephone +31 (0)30 291 67 77. You can also send an email to zorglijfn@npcf.nl. Or see the website www.npcf.nl.

More information about the Dutch Personal Data Protection Act (*Wbp*) is given at the website of the Dutch Data Protection Authority (www.cbpreweb.nl and at www.rijksoverheid.nl/persoonsgegevens).

More information about the Medical Treatment Contracts Act (*WGBO*) is given at www.rijksoverheid.nl. Search by 'rechten van patiënten' (patients' rights).

Colophon

This leaflet is a publication of the VZVZ in association with the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the patients' federation NPCF. The VZVZ was established at the end of 2011 on the initiative of the umbrella organisations of general practitioners (LHV), out-of-hours GP services (VHN), pharmacies (KNMP) and hospitals (NVZ).

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