

# PATIENT SAFETY BLOG

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From Tragedy To Justice - Attorneys For The Injured

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## Should You Read Your Own Medical Records? Yes!

*Posted On: July 23, 2010 by [Patrick A. Malone](#)*

Many patients (and a few doctors) continue to be amazed that the law requires that patients be able to obtain a copy of their own medical records. And reading them is good for your health, I and other patient safety advocates maintain.

Here's what I wrote on a New York Times [blog](#) about this:

Getting and reading your own medical records is Step One of the advice I give patients to become involved, intelligent, and active in their own care. There are at least three things the patient learns:

1. Am I communicating well with this doctor? Is the history of my problems recorded in the records recognizable to me and reasonably complete?

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2. Is there some lab test result that I need to know about where the communications has fallen through the cracks somehow?

3. Are there any errors that need correcting?

These are vital questions that help patients get to the right doctor and make sure tragedies don't occur. Top providers like Brigham & Women's Hospital, the Cleveland Clinic and the Veterans system make it easy for patients to read their own records online. Eventually, we will all read our records routinely, and we'll be healthier for it.

Read comments from other Times' readers [here](#).

A lot of doctors fret about patients reading over their shoulders, but as a non-physician who reads medical records every day, I can say without doubt: It's a good thing.

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