



Houghton Thornley Medical Centres

*"There for you all your life,
your good health with our support,
empowering you to live well"*

Houghton Thornley Medical Centres

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I am married, mum to twin boys aged under 10, John and James and can honestly say that signing up for patient access to mine and my children's records has been one of the best things I have ever done.

The reason that I make this claim is because of a recent incident that involved one of my twins.

I had returned home from work on a Wednesday evening to find that James wasn't feeling very well. The start of that week had started with John being kept off school due to developing cold/flu-like symptoms and it seemed like James had developed what John had but much more. Large, blister shaped boils had erupted all over James' scalp, which were painful to touch and very swollen.

My GP practice was closed at the point of my returning home so I contacted 111 who advised me to see the out of hours GP at the walk-in Centre at the MRI and an appointment was given.

I drove James to the MRI and saw the GP, I explained to her that each time James starts to feel unwell either with a cold or a bug, his head erupts in boil-like blisters that start to leak fluid. I also explained that I had taken James to A&E at the local hospital 6 months prior when the same thing happened, and that medication were prescribed, swabs of the blisters were taken and a referral to a dermatologist was made.

I asked if James could be given the same medication as last time because it worked very effectively, and the GP asked me what the medication was and also what the outcome of the dermatologist appointment was.

At this point I took out my iPad from my handbag, (that I had taken with me to initially occupy James whilst in the waiting room) and explained to the GP that I could log onto James' electronic health record and look at the medication history and referral letters and that I could show them. The GP looked surprised when I said this and questioned 'you can actually see James' electronic health record' to which I replied 'yes, I absolutely can'. Subsequently, I logged on and passed my iPad over to the GP who was able to see the medication prescribed previously and what the dermatologist report outlined. The GP actually said 'this is amazing' and asked how I was able to gain access?

Having access to James' record meant that the consultation was more efficient, the medication prescribed was the same as the one given previously, another referral made for dermatology and we left happy in the knowledge that James got the correct treatment.

The next morning, I received a phone-call from my GP who arranged an appointment with another GP that same day and who also works in dermatology at a local hospital.

In conclusion – I knew having access to my electronic health records made life so much easier for me as a patient by being able to order prescriptions and book appointments – just by logging into an app. But I never really fully appreciated the other benefits of having patient access until this recent incident – it honestly made so much difference. Having talked to friends and family about it (that are patients at different practices) they can't believe how amazing it is and planning on signing up themselves because they too, can see the benefit.

As a further note to add to this – I was once again at the out of hours GP over the Easter bank holiday with James. It had appeared that the medication given to treat his scalp had caused him to develop thrush. The GP asked me what medication he was given, to which I took out my iPad and logged onto James' record and reiterated it to the GP. I was even able to show him pictures of James' scalp when the boils/blisters had erupted as my GP had attached them to his medical record! The GP was positively surprised and said, 'how did you get this?' and 'do you have to pay for this, how is this possible?'

Patient access and understanding is definitely the way forward and for other parents that find themselves in similar situations to mine, I'm confident they will feel the same.

(The names of the children have been changed to maintain confidentiality)

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Mother of twins, patients of Houghton Thornley Medical Centres
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