

How often should we update medical history forms?

Your state may have different requirements, or your attorney may want you to do something different, but I have personally found this system to work pretty well and other experts seem to agree.

Every three years, as a rule, (for those patients with unbelievably complicated medical histories, once a year) have everyone fill out a totally new medical history form.

One way of making it go a little quicker is to have a form that's just medical history (no address, general info, no insurance info, etc.) just medical history.

At least once or twice a year (we do it every time patients get their teeth cleaned), have the patient look over the previously completed medical history form and sign it/initial it and date it and then ask the following questions:

Since we saw you last:

Have you had any chest pain?

Any trouble breathing or shortness of breath?

Are you still taking these medicines (list them)?

Are you on any new medicines for anything?

Are you taking OTC stuff or supplements? Things like aspirin, green tea supplements or garlic supplements? (all are blood thinners)

Have you been in the hospital or emergency room since last time I saw you (last week/last December)?

Have you had surgery?

At every visit, ask the patient if there have been any changes in their medical history since you saw them last, (even if it was yesterday), and it's not a bad idea to ask the same questions above. Hopefully, those questions should jar the memory of just about anyone!

Remember, ALWAYS document that you updated the patient's medical history. If you don't write it down, there's no proof you did it.