

CYBERFIT FAMILY Medical Devices

Fact Sheet October 2018

What is a medical device?

A medical device is any product or equipment used to diagnose, cure, treat or prevent a disease or other health conditions. Some devices operate independently and are used at home or school. Examples of medical devices are baby monitors, nebulizers; infusion pumps; blood glucose meters, apnea monitors, continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machines, monitoring devices and transmitting equipment.

Are some medical devices smart?

More and more medical devices are becoming “smart.” Just like the evolution of the flip phone to the smart phone, it is more common that medical devices can store, process, and transmit health data. They can be connected to the internet, hospital networks, other medical devices and smartphones.

How secure are smart medical devices?

Smart medical devices, like other computer systems, can be vulnerable to security breaches, potentially impacting the safety and effectiveness of the device, or individual privacy. A medical device could be vulnerable if it is configured incorrectly, connected to an unsecured network or software upgrades are not installed. Know how to properly use, configure and maintain the device to keep it secure.

What is the risk in using medical devices that may be exposed to security breaches?

While the increased use of wireless technology and software in medical devices also increases the risks of potential cybersecurity threats, these same features can also improve health care and increase the ability of health care providers to treat patients. All medical devices carry a certain amount of risk, but the benefits to patients can outweigh the risks.

Who can help my family with medical device security assistance?

Most medical device manufacturers and suppliers are committed to providing security for their customers and products. If you have questions or concerns regarding your medical device’s security, contact your health care provider or your device’s manufacturer and supplier. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) encourages health care providers, patients, caregivers and consumers to submit voluntary reports of problems with medical products to FDA’s MedWatch or through the MedWatcher mobile app. For more information, go to <http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/Safety/ReportaProblem>.

Can other equipment interfere with my family’s medical devices?

Ask your provider if anything could interfere with your family’s medical device’s function. Appliances like computers, microwaves or cell phones could affect a device’s signal and its ability to work properly.

What are some of the basic guidelines for using medical devices?

- You, your family and caregivers should understand the instructions and keep them nearby.
- Only allow those you trust to have access to medical devices, and only connect to trusted networks.
- If you have questions, talk to your health care provider or call your device supplier.
- Operate and maintain your family’s devices according to the manufacturer's directions.
- Check with your provider or supplier to see if you can turn off the medical device when not using it.

How do I know if my family member is receiving maximum benefits from a medical device?

- Your family member should have frequent check-ups with their health care provider and home health care team to review health conditions and recommend any equipment changes.
- Follow the device’s manufacturer recommendations for technician servicing and repairs.

