

Practice Privacy Policy

Updated 10 October 2016

Introduction

This privacy policy is to provide information to you, our patient, on how your personal information (which includes your health information) is collected and used within our practice, and the circumstances in which we may share it with third parties.

This practice is bound by the Federal Privacy Act (1988) and the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs).

Why and when your consent is necessary

When you register as a patient of our practice, you provide consent for our GPs and practice staff to access and use your personal information so they can provide you with the best possible healthcare. Only staff who need to see your personal information will have access to it. If we need to use your information for anything else, we will seek additional consent from you to do this.

Why do we collect, use, hold and share your personal information?

Our practice will need to collect your personal information to provide healthcare services to you. Our main purpose for collecting, using, holding and sharing your personal information is to manage your health. We also use it for directly related business activities, such as financial claims and payments, practice audits and accreditation, and business processes (eg staff training).

What personal information do we collect?

The information we will collect about you includes:

- names, date of birth, addresses, contact details
- medical information including medical history, medications, allergies, adverse events, immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors
- Medicare number (where available) for identification and claiming purposes
- healthcare identifiers
- health fund details.

Dealing with us anonymously

A patient has a right to be dealt with anonymously, provided it is lawful and practicable. However, in the medical context this is not likely to be practicable or possible for Medicare and insurance rebate purposes and may be seen as dangerous to the patient's health.

How do we collect your personal information?

Our practice will collect your personal information:

- When you make your first appointment our practice staff will collect your personal and demographic information via your registration.
- During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information. Information can also be collected through the My Health Record system e.g. via a Shared Health Summary or Event Summary.
- We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email or SMS, telephone us or make an online appointment.
- In some circumstances personal information may also be collected from other sources. Often this is because it is not practical or reasonable to collect it from you directly. This may include information from:
 - your guardian or responsible person
 - other involved healthcare providers, such as specialists, allied health professionals, hospitals, community health services and pathology and diagnostic imaging services
 - your health fund, Medicare, or the Department of Veteran's Affairs (as necessary).

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Who do we share your personal information with?

We sometimes share your personal information:

- with third parties who work with our practice for business purposes, such as accreditation agencies or information technology providers – these third parties are required to comply with APPs and this policy
- with other healthcare providers
- when it is required or authorised by law (eg court subpoenas)
- when it is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to a patient's life, health or safety or public health or safety, or it is impractical to obtain the patient's consent
- to assist in locating a missing person
- to establish, exercise or defend an equitable claim
- for the purpose of confidential dispute resolution process
- when there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (eg some diseases require mandatory notification)
- during the course of providing medical services, through Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions (eTP) or My Health Record/PCEHR system (eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).

Only people that need to access your information will be able to do so. Other than in the course of providing medical services or as otherwise described in this policy, our practice will not share personal information with any third party without your consent.

We will not share your personal information with anyone outside Australia (unless under exceptional circumstances that are permitted by law) without your consent.

Our practice will not use your personal information for marketing any of our goods or services directly to you without your express consent. If you do consent, you may opt-out of direct marketing at any time by notifying our practice in writing.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms such as paper records, electronic records, as visual (xrays, CT scans, videos and photos). The storage, use and, where necessary, the transfer of personal health information will be undertaken in a secure manner that protects patient privacy. Paper records are stored in a secure room accessed by staff only when necessary. Electronic records are protected from unauthorised interference, access, modification and disclosure by passwords allowing appropriate and relevant access to authorised members of staff only.

How can you access and correct your personal information at our practice?

You have the right to request access to, and correction of, your personal information.

Our practice acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. We require you to put this request in writing and our practice will respond within 30 days of receipt of the request. The current cost for providing a copy of the patient's complete file is \$26.30 plus any additional postage costs, if applicable. If only selected information is required the fee will be \$12.50.

Our practice will take reasonable steps to correct your personal information where the information is not accurate or up-to-date. From time-to-time, we will ask you to verify your personal information held by our practice is correct and up-to-date. You may also request that we correct or update your information, and you should make such requests in writing to the Practice Manager..

How can you lodge a privacy related complaint, and how will the complaint be handled at our practice?

We take complaints and concerns regarding privacy seriously. You should express any privacy concerns you may have in writing to the Practice Manager at PO Box 122, Murwillumbah NSW 2484. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure within a 30 day period.

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You may also contact the OAIC (Office of the Australian Information Commissioner). Generally the OAIC will require you to give them time to respond, before they will investigate. For further information visit www.oaic.gov.au or call the OAIC on 1300 336 002. You can also write to the **Health Care Complaints Commission**, Locked Bag 18, Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012.

Privacy and our website

Our website uses Google Analytics, a service which transmits website traffic data to Google servers. The tool uses 'cookies' to collect standard Internet log information and visitor behaviour information in an anonymous form. Google Analytics does not identify individual users or associate your IP address with any other data held by Google.

Please note that our website uses 'cookies'. Cookies are very small files which a website uses to identify you when you return to the site and to store details about your use of the site. Cookies are not malicious programs that access or damage your computer. You may refuse the use of cookies by selecting the appropriate settings on your browser, however please note that if you do this you may not be able to use the full functionality of this website.

Our website may contain links to other websites of interest. However, please be aware that we are not responsible for the privacy practices of such other sites. When you click the link to other websites from our we advise you to exercise caution and read the privacy statement applicable to the website in question.

Policy review statement

This privacy policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur.