

Introduction

This policy explains how Main Street Medical Centre (MSMC) collects and uses personal and health information and when this information may be shared. MSMC complies with the Federal Privacy Act (1988) and Australian Privacy Principles (APPs).

Why and when your consent is necessary

When you register as a patient of the practice, you provide consent for MSMC GPs and practice personnel to access and use your personal information so they can provide you with the best possible healthcare. Only personnel who need to see your personal information will have access to it. If MSMC needs to use your information for anything else, additional consent from you will be sought.

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

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

What personal information does MSMC collect?

The information MSMC will collect about you includes your:

- 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 MSMC anonymously

You have the right to deal with MSMC anonymously or under a pseudonym unless it is impracticable for the practice to do so or unless the practice is required or authorised by law to only deal with identified individuals.

How does MSMC collect your personal information?

The practice may collect your personal information in several different ways.

- When you make your first appointment MSMC practice personnel will collect your personal and demographic information via your registration.
- During the course of providing medical services, MSMC may collect further personal information. Information can also be collected through electronic transfer of prescriptions (eTP), My Health Record, eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary.
- MSMC may also collect your personal information when you visit the website, send an email or SMS, telephone the practice 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 Veterans' Affairs.

When, why and with whom does MSMC share your personal information?

MSMC sometimes shares your personal information:

- with third parties who work with the 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 eTP, My Health Record (eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).

Only people who 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, MSMC will not share personal information with any third party without your consent.

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

The practice will not use your personal information for marketing any 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 the practice in writing.

MSMC may use your personal information to improve the quality of its services through research and analysis of patient data. The practice may also provide de-identified data to other organisations to improve population health outcomes. This information is secure, cannot identify patients, and is stored within Australia. You can let reception personnel know if you do not want your information included.

Additionally, de-identified data may be shared with trusted AI providers under strict controls to improve healthcare quality and outcomes. This sharing follows these principles: thorough identification before sharing, partnerships only with providers maintaining rigorous security standards, agreements prohibiting re-identification attempts, and contractual obligations requiring data to remain within Australia. You may opt out of having your de-identified data shared with AI providers at any time by notifying the practice personnel.

How does MSMC store and protect your personal information?

Records are stored securely in both paper and electronic formats with paper records secured in personnel-only areas, electronic records password-protected with authorised access only, and all personnel required to sign confidentiality agreements.

MSMC retains adult patient records for 7 years from the last entry and children's records until they reach age 25, with access restricted to authorised personnel only. When records are no longer needed, MSMC securely destroys physical documents through shredding and permanently erases electronic records using certified methods. When required, MSMC de-identifies data by removing all identifying details.

How can you access and correct your personal information at MSMC?

You can request access to your personal information or ask for corrections by writing to the Practice Manager. MSMC will respond within 30 days. Copies of records are available for \$26.30 plus postage. The practice regularly verifies information accuracy and will take reasonable steps to correct any inaccurate or outdated information. From time to time, the practice may ask you to confirm your information is current.

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

Privacy concerns should be addressed in writing to: Practice Manager, PO Box 122, Murwillumbah NSW 2484
Response provided within 30 days.

Alternative contacts:

- OAIC: 1300 336 002, www.oaic.gov.au
- Health Care Complaints Commission: Locked Bag 18, Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012
Email: hccc@hccc.nsw.gov.au

MSMC takes complaints and concerns regarding privacy seriously. You should express any privacy concerns in writing. The practice will attempt to resolve it in accordance with the resolution procedure within 30 days.

You may also contact the OAIC, who will generally require you to give them time to respond before they investigate. For further information visit www.oaic.gov.au or call 1300 363 992.

Privacy and the MSMC website

Visit www.mainstmed.com.au for practice information. Email feedback is welcome but not for appointments or medical advice due to security considerations.

Policy review statement

This policy is reviewed annually. Patients will be notified of changes via waiting room notices. Copies are available upon request.

Disclaimer

This Privacy Policy is intended for use as a guide only and may or may not apply to all specific circumstances. Main Street Medical Centre (MSMC) has made every effort to ensure this policy addresses current and anticipated privacy requirements for our medical practice. Patients and personnel implementing these procedures should exercise their own judgement or seek appropriate professional advice when necessary. While this policy is designed for MSMC's operations, it does not guarantee compliance with all privacy laws and cannot itself guarantee complete discharge of our duty of care to patients. Therefore, MSMC disclaims all liability (including negligence) to any users of the information in this policy for any loss or damage (consequential or otherwise), cost or expense incurred or arising by reason of reliance on this policy.