

Keeping your Personal Information Private in our Practice 2024

Purpose

This privacy policy explains how personal information about you and your health is recorded and managed in our practice. Should you have any concerns regarding the privacy of your personal health information or any doubts regarding the accuracy of the information held by the practice, we strongly encourage you to discuss these concerns with our practice staff or your doctors.

Private Information Collection

The personal information we collect includes your name, date of birth, address(es), contact details, Medicare number, healthcare identifiers and health fund details. Medical information may include medical history as well as any ongoing care requirements. General Practitioners (GPs) need information about your past and present health information to provide you with high-quality care.

Wherever practicable, we will primarily collect information directly from you. However, there may be instances where we also need to gather information from other sources, including treating specialists, radiologists, pathologists, hospitals, other healthcare providers, as well as from the My Health Record system and our current booking system, Hotdoc.

Our practice follows the guidelines of the RACGP's Privacy and managing health information in general practice resource. The resource incorporates federal and state privacy legislation, and the Australian Privacy Principles, which mandate the confidentiality and security of your personal information.

Your Medical Records

We are committed to maintaining the integrity of your medical records by ensuring that they:

- Are accurate, complete, well-organised and legible.
- Are kept up to date with the latest information pertaining to your health.
- Include sufficient details to enable another GP to provide continuity of care.
- Incorporate a concise summary of your medical history and ongoing treatment.
- Can be utilised, with your consent, to send reminders for follow-up appointments, check-ups, and reviews.

If you have any concerns or uncertainties about why certain information is being requested, please don't hesitate to discuss them with your GP or the practice staff.

Providing your Information to other GPs

In medical practice, all GPs typically have access to your medical records. Comprehensive care often involves sharing relevant medical history with other healthcare professionals involved in your treatment. Your GP will communicate with you whenever it's necessary to share specific information with other providers.

Providing your Information to others

Your personal information, which identifies you, will only be disclosed to others with your explicit consent, unless under exceptional circumstances. Obtaining your consent is the cornerstone principle guiding our practice in the utilisation and sharing of your information.

Our practice will not share your personal health information with anyone else or another organisation unless:

- You have explicitly consented to such sharing.
- Legal obligations mandate the disclosure of information. In such cases, your GP will first discuss with you the specifics of the information they are legally required to disclose.
- The information is necessary for you to obtain Medicare payments or other health insurance rebates.
- There is an overriding public health and safety interest that warrants the release of the information.

In the above cases, only information necessary to meet the requirements will be provided. Typically, your health information will not be sent overseas unless you are informed and provide consent for this to occur, and the receiving overseas country adheres to privacy laws that closely mirror the Australian Privacy Principles.

Using Health Information for Quality Improvement and Research

This practice may use patient health information to enhance the quality of care provided to all patients through the review of treatment methods employed within the practice. Your information held by the practice may be used in research projects aimed at improving healthcare within the community; however, this information will not include data that can identify you.

All information is securely stored within Australia. Should you prefer that your information not be included in such initiatives, please inform our reception staff accordingly.

Under guidelines established by the Australian Government, identifiable medical records may be employed for medical research without your explicit consent. However, your GP will engage in discussions with you before disclosing any identifiable information, ensuring transparency and adherence to your preferences.

Security of Information in the Practice

Australian privacy legislation applies to all personal health information recorded in electronic and paper records. This legislation mandates stringent measures to safeguard such information against unauthorized access. Our practice is fully committed to complying with these requirements to ensure the utmost protection of your information.

Access to your Health Information

You have the right to ask practice staff about any aspect of your healthcare, including your medical record. If you wish, you can request access to it and other information held by the practice.

Your GP will assess potential harm before granting access and may redact sensitive details to protect privacy. Open communication fosters a strong patient-practitioner relationship, and your GP can explain your record thoroughly. Please note, depending on the request, there may be associated costs.

Direct Marketing

This practice does not engage in direct marketing.

Resolving Concerns regarding the Privacy of your Health Information

Should you have any concerns regarding the privacy of your personal health information or any doubts regarding the accuracy of the information held by the practice, we strongly encourage you to discuss these concerns with our practice staff.

If you have questions or a complaint about the privacy of your personal information, please ask to speak to the privacy contact officer at the practice. Further information on privacy legislation is available from:

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner Ph 1300 363 992

www.oaic.gov.au

Information and Privacy Commission New South Wales Ph 1800 472 679

www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/privacy/ipc_index.html