

Aim

This leaflet is to ensure patients who receive care from the Practice are comfortable in entrusting their health information to the Practice. Your doctor will be happy to discuss this with you.

Patient Consent

The Practice will only interpret and apply a patient's consent for the primary purpose for which it was provided. The Practice staff must seek additional consent from the patient if the personal information collected may be used for any other purpose.

Collection of information

The Practice will need to collect personal information as a provision of clinical services to a patient at the practice.

Collected personal information will include patients':

- names, addresses and contact details
- Medicare number for identification and claiming purposes.
- healthcare identifiers
- Medical information including medical history, medications, allergies, adverse events, immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors.

A patients' personal information may be held at the practice in various forms:

- as electronic records
- as visual – x-rays, CT scans and photos.
- as paper records.

Practice staff collects this information via patient registration forms when patients present to the Practice for the first time. Patients are encouraged to pay attention to the consent section of the registration form when signing it details the collection and use and disclosure of patient information.

Personal information may also be collected from the patients' parent's guardian or responsible person, or from any other involved healthcare specialists.

All personal health information is kept private and secure, whether in electronic format, in protected information systems or in hard copy format in a secured environment.

Use and disclosure

Personal information will only be used for the purpose of providing medical services and for claims and payments. Some disclosure may occur to third parties engaged by or for the Practice for business purposes, such as accreditation or for the provision of information technology. These third parties are required to comply with this policy. The practice will inform the patient where there is a statutory requirement to disclose certain personal information such as some diseases require mandatory notification.

This Practice will not disclose personal information to a third party other than in the course of providing medical services, without full disclosure to the patient or the recipient, the reason for the information transfer and full consent from the patient. The Practice will not disclose personal information to anyone outside Australia without need and without patient consent.

Exceptions to disclose without patient consent are where the information is:

- required by law
- necessary to lessen or prevent serious threat to a person's life, health or safety or public health or safety, or it is impractical to obtain patient consent
- to assist in locating a missing person

- to establish, exercise or defend an equitable claim.
- For the purpose of a confidential dispute resolution process.

The Practice will not use any personal information in relation to direct marketing to a patient without that patients' express consent. Patients' may opt out of direct marketing at any time by notifying the Practice in a letter or email.

The Practice evaluates all unsolicited information it receives to decide if it should be kept, acted on or destroyed.

Your Medical Records

Your doctor will do his/her best to make sure that your medical records:

- are accurate, comprehensive, well-organised and legible;
- are up to date;
- have enough information to allow another doctor to care for you;
- do not contain offensive or irrelevant comments about you;
- contain a summary of your care; and
- can be used to remind you, with your permission, to return for follow up, check ups and reviews.

Your doctor will only collect information which is relevant to your medical care. If you are uncertain as to why information is being requested, ask your doctor.

If you want access to health care and maintain your anonymity, ask your doctor.

Using health information for quality improvement and research

We use patient health information to assist in improving the quality of care we give to all our patients by reviewing the treatments used in the practice.

We may also use information that does not identify you in research projects to improve health care in the community. You will normally be informed if your information is to be used for this purpose and will have the opportunity to refuse to have your unidentified information used in this way.

Wherever practicable, the information used for research will not be in a form that would enable you to be identified. The publication of research results which use your information will never be in a form that enables you to be identified.

In some circumstances, where the research serves an important public interest, identifiable medical records can be used for medical research without your consent under guidelines issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council. This research must be approved by an official ethics committee.

Your access to your health information

The Practice acknowledges patient's may request access to the information contained in your medical record.

If you request a summary or direct access to your full medical record, your doctor will need to consider the risk of any physical or mental harm to you or any other person which may result from disclosure of your health information, and may need to remove any information that may impact on the privacy of other individuals.

Patients are encouraged to make this request in writing, and the Practice will respond within a reasonable time.

Depending on what is involved, you may be asked to contribute to the cost of providing the information.

Resolving your concerns regarding the privacy of your health information

The Practice takes complaints and concerns about privacy of the patient's personal information seriously.

If you have any concerns regarding the privacy of your health information or regarding the accuracy of the information held by the practice, you should express these concerns in writing. Inaccurate information will be corrected. The Practice will attempt to resolve any privacy concerns in accordance with its complaint resolution procedure.

For legal reasons, the original notes will be retained.

Further information on Privacy Legislation is available from:

Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner
1300 363 992

Office of the Health Services Commissioner
(Victoria) 1800 136 066

Office of the QLD Privacy Commissioner
(07) 3234 7373.

Office of the NSW Privacy Commissioner
02 9268 5588



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Personal Information, Privacy and your doctor 'Your Privacy is our Business'