

Australian Privacy Policy

MANAGING PATIENT INFORMATION

On March 2014 changes to the Privacy Act 1988 were implemented resulting in the introduction of the new principles called Australian Privacy Principles.

Purpose

To ensure patients who receive care from the Practice are comfortable in entrusting their health information to the Practice. The policy provides information to patients as to how their personal information is collected and used within the Practice, and the circumstances in which may disclose it to third parties.

Practice Procedure:

The Practice will

- Provide copy of this policy upon request
- Ensure staff comply with the APP and deal with inquiries and concerns
- Take such steps as are reasonable in their circumstances to ensure compliance with the APP and deal with inquiries or complaints
- Collect personal information for the primary purpose of managing a patient's healthcare and for financial claims and payments

Staff Responsibility

The Practice's staff will take reasonable steps to ensure that our patients understand:

- What information has been and is being collected
- Why the information is being collected, and whether this is due to a legal requirement
- How the information will be used or disclosed
- Why and when their consent is necessary
- The Practice's procedure for access and correction of information, and responding to complaints of information breaches, including providing this policy.

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 purposes.

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 (where available) (for identification and claiming purposes)
- Healthcare identifiers
- Medical History, medications, allergies, adverse events, immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors

A patient's personal information may be held at the Practice in various forms: as paper records, electronic records, visual – Xrays, CT scans, videos and photos and audio recordings.

The Practice's procedure for collecting information:

- Practice staff collects personal and demographic information via registration form. Patients are encouraged to pay attention to the collection statement within the form.
- During the course of providing medical services, our Practitioner will consequently collect further personal information.
- Personal information may also be collected from the patient's guardian or responsible person, or from any other involved healthcare specialist.
- The Practice holds all personal information securely, whether in electronic format or hard copy.

Use & Disclosure of Information

Personal information will only be used for the purpose of providing medical services, and for claims and payments, unless otherwise consented to. Some disclosure may occur third parties engaged by or for the Practice for business purposes, such as accreditation or for the provision of information technology. The Practice will inform patient where there is a statutory requirements to disclose certain personal information (for example, some diseases require mandatory notification).

The following are the exceptions to disclose without patient consent:

- Required by law
- To prevent or lessen serious threat to a patient's life, health or safety or public health or safety, or it is impractical to obtain 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 patient's express consent. Patients may opt-out at any time by notifying us in letter or mail. The Practice evaluates all unsolicited information to decide if it should be kept, acted on or destroyed.

Access

The Practice acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. Patients are encouraged to make a request in writing and we will respond within a reasonable time. The Practice may impose a charge for photocopying or for staff time involved in processing your request.

The Practice will take reasonable steps to correct personal information where it is satisfied they are not accurate or up to date. From time to time the Practice will verify your information is correct and up to date. Patients may also request to correct or update their information.

The Practice takes complaints and concerns about the privacy of personal information seriously. Any concerns should be expressed in writing. The Practice will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with its complaint resolution procedure.