



Privacy Policy

Local Doctors

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Our practice is committed to the protection of your personal information following the standards set out by the Privacy Act (1988) and the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs).

The Privacy Policy detailed below aims to inform you of the kinds of personal information that we collect and hold, how we collect and hold personal information, the purposes for which we collect, hold, use and disclose personal information, how you may access your personal information and seek correction of that information, the process for making a complaint about a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles, and whether we are likely to disclose personal information to recipients overseas.

What kinds of personal information do we collect?

In the interest of providing best practice care we may collect and hold personal information related to:

- Your name, date of birth, contact details (address & telephone numbers), cultural identification, next of kin and emergency contact
- Your Medicare, Pension and/or DVA number
- Your health information including your past and current medical history, medications, vaccination history, results of diagnostic tests and reports from others involved in your care (i.e. specialists) and details of your consultations for each contact with the treating clinician.

How do we collect and hold personal information?

Wherever possible, your personal information is collected directly from you with your consent. Patients have the option to read and sign the section of the New Patient Form outlining the conditions to disclose their health information to the third party. Where a patient is unable to provide information due to competency or age, it is reasonable to collect the required information from a known caregiver. Personal information may also be collected from third parties, with your consent (i.e. your previous medical practice).

In our practice, your personal information is held securely in electronic health files and protected by antiviral software and appropriate firewalls. Access to all computers is password protected.

Why do we collect, hold, use and disclose personal information?

Doctors, Allied Health, Nurse and Reception staff members can access patient health information.

The doctors, nurse and allied health have full access to patient health information.

The reception staff receives specific instructions from the doctor on receiving and storing patient health information for administrative purpose. The reception staff members are restricted in altering any information and have limited access to doctor's, nurse's and allied health notes.

It is our legal obligation to release patient information, even if we do not have the patient's consent at the request of:

- Subpoena
- Court Order
- Search Warrant
- Public Health Unit
- AIR (Australian Immunisation Register)

In general, we may collect, hold, use and disclose your personal information for the following purposes:

- To properly assess, diagnose and manage your health care needs, including communication with others involved in your care, such as specialist and allied health providers
- To be able to communicate with you, as needed, including notifying you about health services you may be due for or which require follow-up with your GP
- To comply with any legal obligation which may include mandatory notification of infectious disease or disclosure required by a court of law
- For administrative purposes in running our practice, such as managing accounts and complying with Medicare requirements

How can you access and correct your personal information?

You have the right to request access to all or specific parts of your health record held by our practice. Where such access is believed to cause risk of harm to yourself or someone else access may be denied, with a clear explanation of the reason(s) for denial.

If your personal information changes and you would like to make an amendment to the information held by our practice you are encouraged to let us know. Where you and your doctor disagree about the accuracy of information held in your record, you may ask to add a statement to your file, in association with the relevant information, claiming that you believe the information to be inaccurate.

If a fee is charged for providing access to your record, you will be advised of the cost in advance.

How can you make a privacy related complaint?

We will take reasonable steps to protect the security of your personal information and comply with our legal obligations. Our staff are trained and required to respect your privacy. We take reasonable steps to protect your information from misuse, loss, unauthorized access or disclosure.

If you have any questions about privacy-related issues or wish to make a complaint about a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles or the handling of your personal information by our practice, please contact our Privacy Officer. You may lodge your complaint in writing and our Privacy Officer will notify you of the outcome of the investigation, usually within 30 days.

Are we likely to disclose your personal information overseas?

We may disclose your personal information overseas in the following situations:

- Any overseas practice or individual involved in your health care (such as transferring your health information to a new provider when you are moving overseas or having treatment from an overseas provider)
- Anyone else to whom you authorise us to disclose your information
- Anyone else where we are authorised by law to disclose your information

Email Usage Policy

Our practice does not transfer patient health information via email unless it is encrypted or password protected. General email is not considered to be a secure form of transmission and for this reason we encourage all patients NOT to send personal health information to the practice via email. In the interests of your care and the confidentiality of your personal information we do not answer clinical questions via email. All patients are encouraged to make an appointment to see their preferred GP to discuss any medical matters. It should also be noted that emails may only be checked once each day and for this reason email should ONLY be used for non-urgent administrative purposes.

Who is the Practice Privacy Officer?

The practice Business Manager is responsible for coordinating, implementing and monitoring the practice's Privacy Policy and liaising with all staff and patients for any issues related to privacy of information. For all privacy related inquiries or complaints you can contact the practice Privacy Officer by mail at 8 Betty Cuthbert Avenue, Ermington NSW 2115 or by calling the practice on (02) 8622 1681.