

Our practice takes the security of personal health information very seriously indeed. During a normal consultation, our doctors and nurses collect information regarding current symptoms and duration, significant past medical and surgical history, current medications, allergies and adverse reactions, smoking, exercise, alcohol and nutrition history and family and occupational history.

The purpose of collecting this information in a consultation is to enable the doctor to provide complete and comprehensive health care to the individual.

Doctors, allied health practitioners and all other staff and contractors associated with this Practice have a responsibility to maintain the privacy of personal health information and related financial information.

The privacy of this information is every patient's right. The maintenance of privacy requires that any information regarding individual patients, including staff members who may be patients, may not be disclosed either verbally, in writing, in electronic form, by copying either at the Practice or outside it, during or outside work hours, except for strictly authorised use within the patient care context at the Practice or as legally directed.

There are no degrees of privacy. All patient information must be considered private and confidential, even that which is seen or heard and therefore is not to be disclosed to family, friends, staff or others without the patient's approval. Sometimes details about a person's medical history or other contextual information such as details of an appointment can identify them, even if no name is attached to that information. This is still considered health information and as such it must be protected under the Privacy Act.

Practitioners in our practice have access to health information in order to best provide comprehensive and complete health care to the individual. Our receptionists have limited access to health information in order to be able to provide practitioners specific instructions for example, providing telephone information regarding results.

Patients at this practice have the right to access their personal health information (medical record) under legislation. Commonwealth Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000. This principle obliges health service providers and other organisations that hold health information about a person to give them access to their health information on request, subject to certain exceptions and the payment of fees (if any).

This practice complies with the law and the National and Health Privacy Principles and the amendment act 2012 (*NPPs & HPPs*) adopted therein. Both Acts give individuals the right to know what information a private sector organisation holds about them, the

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right to access this information and to also make corrections if they consider data is incorrect. The procedure for patients to gain access to their own health information, is to apply in writing to their usual doctor at the above address.

Patients occasionally require the practice to disclose their personal health information to a third party, for instance, insurance company, worker's compensation or employer. Our practice requires informed written patient consent prior to the disclosure of any health information. Should a patient wish their health information to be transferred to another medical practice, we require written consent and will be happy to transfer patient health information in the preferred manner of the receiving practice.

Our own preferred manner of transfer is encrypted via medical objects. Our practice occasionally does internal audits for the purposes of Quality Assurance. The use of patient health information for quality assurance, research and professional development is always de-identified.

In the circumstance that the patient would like to be referred to a specialist or other allied health provider or the General Practitioner deems Specialist referral to be in the best interest of the patient, a referral will be provided. This referral will usually contain the full health summary of the patient including past medical history, allergies and medications. Should the patient not wish to share specific information with the nominated provider, this matter should be discussed with the GP and the patient given the opportunity to have non-essential history deleted from the referral.

Our online appointment system is externally run by Health Engine. Health Engine only deals with appointment related data. Further information about Health Engine privacy policy may be found at www.healthengine.com.au or ask our reception staff to show you their website.

Email and fax correspondence should not be used for personal and/or confidential matters as we are unable to guarantee the privacy of these mediums, therefore no confidential information will be discussed or released via email.

If a patient is unsatisfied in the way the practice handles privacy related matters, they should direct their query to Ms Ella Liu – Practice Manager and Privacy Officer.

Thank you for taking the time to read our policy – we are here for you should you have any questions.

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