



## Privacy Policy Statement

Current as of: 09/05/2022

### Introduction

This privacy policy is to provide information to you, our patient, on how your personal information (which includes your health information) is collected and used within our practice, and the circumstances in which we may share it with third parties.

### Why and when your consent is necessary?

When you register as a patient of our practice, you provide consent for our GPs and practice staff to access and use your personal information so they can provide you with the best possible healthcare. Only staff who need to see your personal information will access it. If we need to use your information for anything else, we will seek additional consent from you to do this.

When you sign our New Patient Form to become a patient with The Surgery, you consent to the following use and disclosure of your information for purposes such as:

- Account keeping and billing purposes.
- Referral to another medical practitioner or health care provider
- Sending specimens, such as blood samples or pap smears, for analysis
- Quality assurance, practice accreditation and complaint handling
- To meet our obligations to our medical defence organisations or insurers
- To prevent or lessen a serious threat to an individual's life, health or safety
- Where legally required to do so, such as producing medical records to a court, or, mandatory reporting of child abuse
- the notification of certain communicable diseases
- To meet our legal obligations to Companies in regards to pre-employment and other medical examinations

## **Why do we collect, use, hold and share your personal information?**

Our practice will need to collect your personal information to provide healthcare services to you.

Our main purpose for collecting, using, holding and sharing your personal information is to manage your health. We also use it for directly related business activities, such as financial claims and payments, practice audits and accreditation, and business processes (eg staff training).

## **What personal information do we collect?**

The information we will collect about you includes:

- Names
- Date of birth,
- Addresses,
- Contact details
- Medical information including medical history,
- Medications,
- Allergies,
- Adverse events,
- Immunisations,
- Social history,
- Family history and risk factors
- Medicare number (where available) for identification and claiming purposes
- Healthcare identifiers
- Health fund details.

## **Dealing with us anonymously**

You have the right to deal with us anonymously or under a pseudonym where it is practical and legal for us to do so.

Any request to be treated anonymously or under a pseudonym will require the consent of the treating medical practitioner who is required to ensure that they provide healthcare in accordance with the policies and regulations of The Medical Board of Australia, The Australian Department of Health and Medicare Australia. GPs are obliged by law to report communicable diseases and child abuse.

Where you choose to be treated anonymously or under a pseudonym you will be responsible for all medical costs incurred at the practice without recourse to Medicare or other subsidies.

## **Collection, use, storage and sharing of your personal information**

Our practice collects personal information in different ways.

When you make your first appointment our practice staff will collect your personal and demographic information via your registration. During the course of providing medical services, we will collect further personal information.

Information can also be collected and shared through electronic transfer of prescriptions , The Australian My Health Record system.

We will also collect your personal information when you, send us an email or SMS, telephone us or make an online appointment.

In some circumstances personal information may also be collected from other sources where it is not practical or reasonable to collect it from you directly.

This may include information from:

- Your guardian or responsible person
- Other involved healthcare providers, such as specialists, allied health professionals, hospitals, community health services and pathology and diagnostic imaging services
- Your health fund, Medicare, or the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

We sometimes share your personal information:

- With third parties who work with our practice, such as accreditation agencies or information technology providers – these third parties are required to comply with our policy and the Australian Privacy Principles
- With other healthcare providers
- When it is required or authorised by law (eg court subpoenas)
- When it is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to a patient's life, health or safety
- When it is necessary for the general health and safety of the community
- When it is impractical to obtain the patient's consent
- To assist in locating a missing person
- To establish, exercise or defend an equitable claim
- For the purpose of confidential dispute resolution process
- When there is a statutory requirement to share personal information (eg reporting of communicable diseases)

Only people who need to access your information will do so. Other than in the course of providing

medical services or as otherwise described in this policy, our practice will not share personal information with any third party without your consent.

This means that should a relative/friend/loved one call us and request information regarding your medical notes/results/appointments/medical information, we will not disclose that information to them without written or verbal permission granted from you directly. We will not share your personal information with anyone outside Australia (unless under exceptional circumstances that are permitted by law) without your consent.

Where a young person is capable of making their own decisions regarding their privacy, they are allowed to do so. The general practitioner may discuss the child's record with their parent; however, each case is to be managed subject to the individual circumstances.

A parent does not necessarily have the right to their child's information

Our practice will not use your personal information for direct marketing of our goods or services without your consent. Our practice may use your de-identified personal information to improve the quality of the services we offer to our patients through research and analysis of our patient data.

We may provide de-identified data to other organisations to improve population health outcomes. The information is securely transferred and stored in Australia and patients cannot be identified.

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms:

- Electronically
- Paper Records
- Visual Records

Our practice securely stores all personal information . Access to our electronic records is secured by the use of passwords. Hard copy records are held in a secure environment. All our staff sign a confidentiality agreement in regards to dealing with your personal information.

### **How can you access and correct your personal information at our practice?**

You do not own the medical records we hold in regards to the healthcare treatment we have provided or arranged for you.

You do have the right to request access to, and correction of, your personal information.

To request access we require you to put this request in writing, sign it, and present it to our Office

Manager or Practice Manager. We will verify your identity before accepting and processing your request. We will respond to these requests within a reasonable time, generally within 30 days.

While you are permitted access to your records, our Practice will endeavour to provide access in the form you request..

Access can be denied where:

- To provide access would create a serious threat to life or health
- There is a legal impediment to access
- The access would unreasonably impact on the privacy of another
- The information relates to anticipated or actual legal proceedings.

Our practice will take reasonable steps to correct your personal information where the information is not accurate or up to date. We will ask you to verify that certain personal information held by our practice is correct and current at each visit to our practice. You may also request that we correct or update your information. Such requests should be directed to the reception staff in person or via a signed request directed to the Office Manager or Practice Manager.

### **Lodging a privacy-related complaint?**

#### **How will the complaint in regards to you privacy be handled?**

We take complaints and concerns regarding privacy seriously. Please raise any privacy concerns you may have in writing and address your concerns to the Office Manager or Practice Manager.

**By Email:** *practicemanager@thesurgery.net.au*

**By Post:** *PO BOX 546, Albany 6331*

**In Person:** 8 Hardie Road, Spencer Park

You can also call us on 9842 5900 and ask to speak with the Practice Manager or the Office Manager. All complaints will be handled within a reasonable time generally within 30 days.

You may also contact the Office of The Australian Information Commissioner. For further information visit [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au) or call the Office of The Australian Information Commissioner on 1300 363 992.

## **Privacy and our website**

Our Practice is committed to securing your data and keeping it confidential. Our Practice strives to prevent data theft, unauthorised access, and disclosure of personal information by implementing the latest technologies and software, which help us safeguard the information we collect and store online.

When you visit the website, we may collect the following data:

- Your IP address.
- Your contact information and email address should you email us through our website 'contact us' form.

Our website contains links that lead to other websites. If you click on these links The Surgery is not responsible for your data and privacy protection on these other websites. Visiting these websites is not governed by this privacy policy. Please ensure you read the privacy policy documentation of any website you go to from our website.

## **Policy review statement**

Our privacy policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur. Should there be any amendments to the privacy policy regarding storage and access to your records, information will be posted at the Reception desk at both of our practice locations.