



Privacy Policy

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 have access to it. If we need to use your information for anything else, we will seek additional consent from you to do this.

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 for communicating with your My Health Record
- health fund details if applicable
- mobile phone numbers (we will ask for your explicit consent to communicate with you using SMS)
- email addresses (you may provide an email address if you wish to communicate electronically, however we will ask for specific information at the time to ensure we have your consent and correct email address)

Dealing with us anonymously

You have the right to deal with us anonymously or under a pseudonym unless it is impracticable for us to do so or unless we are required or authorised by law to only deal with identified individuals.

How do we collect your personal information?

Our practice will collect your personal information:

1. When you make your first appointment our practice staff will collect your personal and demographic information via your registration.
2. During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information.
3. We participate in the My Health Record system. We will explain this system to you and seek your permission to participate

4. We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email or SMS, telephone us, make an online appointment or communicate with us using electronic or social media.
5. In some circumstances personal information may also be collected from other sources. Often this is because 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 Veteran's Affairs (as necessary)

Who do we share your personal information with?

We sometimes share your personal information:

- with third parties who work with our practice for business purposes, such as accreditation agencies or information technology providers – these third parties are required to comply with APPs and this policy
- 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 or public health or safety, or 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 certain personal information (eg some diseases require mandatory notification)
- during the course of providing medical services, through Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions and My Health Record system (eg sending a script, Shared Health Summary, Event Summary)

Only people that need to access your information will be able to 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.

We will not share your personal information with anyone outside Australia (unless under exceptional circumstances that are permitted by law) without your consent.

Our practice will not use your personal information for marketing any of our goods or services directly to you without your express consent. If you do consent, you may opt-out of direct marketing at any time by notifying our practice in writing. At registration you will be asked to participate in our reminder system. This is a service we supply in the interest of your health. You may choose to 'opt out' of this service at any time by speaking to your doctor or the admin team.

You may be asked to supply your mobile number to be used for reminders of appointments and to remind you of health checkups and follow-up. You may choose to 'opt out' of this service at any time by speaking to your doctor or the admin team.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms. Your information is almost always kept on our computer system. However there are times when letters and faxes may be awaiting doctor approval before transferring into the computer.

Xrays, scans and photos may arrive at our surgery. These will be offered to you or destroyed after relevant transfer to the computer system

Our practice stores all personal information securely. Our computer system is compliant with the Computer Information Security Standards set by our professional body (RACGP CISS) in line with the Privacy Act. These standards

include virus protection, firewall software, individual passwords, regular backups that are tested, safe storage of electronic equipment, destruction of devices and supporting policies and procedures that are known to all team members.

All team members with access to information including IT Providers have signed confidentiality statements and are trained in protecting your information.

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

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

Our practice acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. We require you to put this request in writing to the Practice Manager at the practice address and we will respond within 30 days.

There may be a fee attached for the administration and doctor time required to comply with the request.

Our practice will take reasonable steps to correct your personal information where the information is not accurate or up-to-date. From time-to-time we will ask you to verify that your personal information held by our practice is correct and up-to-date. You may also request that we correct or update your information, and you should make such requests in writing to the Practice Manager at the practice address.

How can you lodge a privacy related complaint, and how will the complaint be handled at our practice?

We take complaints and concerns regarding privacy seriously. You should express any privacy concerns you may have in writing to the Practice Manager at Elanora Heights Medical Practice, Shop 3, 69 Kalang Road, Elanora Heights, NSW 2101. We will then attempt to resolve it within 30 days in accordance with our resolution procedure which involves discussion with the relevant doctor/s.

You may also contact the OAIC. Generally the OAIC will require you to give them time to respond, before they will investigate. For further information visit www.oaic.gov.au or call the OAIC on 1300 336 002.

Privacy and our website

You may be asked to supply personal information when making on line appointments via our website. This is for us to correctly identify you as the patient booking an appointment and to ensure you confirm your appointment using your email or mobile number.

Policy review statement

This privacy policy is reviewed annually or when there are specific changes in our practice or externally that may affect you. We will notify you via our website and at the reception desk if and when changes occur.



Privacy Policy Summary

- We only request information from you to be used in the interest of your health
- We will regularly update your records and correct where necessary
- Your information is kept on our computer system that is kept safe and secure in line with the standards set by our professional body (including virus protection, firewall software, individual passwords, regular backups that are tested, safe storage of electronic equipment, destruction of devices and supporting policies and procedures that are known to all team members)
- Documents containing identifiable or personal health information are transferred to computer and destroyed or securely filed
- All practice members and our IT provider have access to your records. They have all signed confidentiality statements and have been educated on the importance of protecting your privacy. They understand that breaching confidentiality is a dismissible offense
- Visitors to the service after hours do not have access to the filing cabinets or the computer system
- Your information may be used to generate letters to you or prompt contact with you in the interest of your health. You may nominate to withdraw from this service
- You may provide an email address if you wish to communicate electronically, however we will ask for specific information at the time of communicating to ensure we have your consent and correct email
- Your mobile phone may be used to generate a text message prompting you to contact the surgery in the interest of your health. You may nominate to withdraw from this service
- Your information may be disclosed in a de-identifiable form to improve the quality of care or for research purposes. Where possible we will notify you of these projects
- If and when maintenance on our computer system is necessary we will ensure the security of your information. We will encrypt or de-identify the information or, in the instance when this cannot be done, insist all people involved sign a confidentiality statement and are educated about confidentiality
- We respect your right to decide how your information is used or disclosed. We do not disclose patient information to a third party without your consent unless:
 - Disclosure is necessary because you are at risk of harm and you cannot give consent
 - Your Doctor is legally obliged to disclose information
 - The information is necessary to obtain Medicare payments or other rebates
 - Disclosure is necessary for quality improvement in your health care
 - There is an overriding public interest in the release of information
 - Upon request from another service provider in the interest of your health e.g. pathology results, diagnostic imaging, medications or specialist letters
- You may have access to the information contained in your medical record. You may ask your doctor about any aspect of this record. Your doctor will provide you with an accurate and up to date summary should you require this. You may request a copy of your medical record or make alterations to your record however; these must be submitted in writing for review and may incur a fee
- All patients attending or contacting the practice will be asked to self identify using Name, Date of Birth and Address

Please visit our website or ask reception for a copy of our full Privacy Policy