



women's wellbeing

a general practice for women

Privacy Policy

Protecting the Privacy of your Personal Information

What happens to my information when I see my GP?

This brochure has been developed to let you know how this practice handles your information. If you have some questions after you have read this brochure or would like to see our Privacy Policy, please talk to your GP or one of our caring practice staff.

What types of information do you collect?

Your doctor needs information about your past and present health in order to provide you with high quality care. Information is called "personal health information" if it concerns your health, medical history or past or future medical care and if someone reading it would be able to identify you.

This practice follows the *Guidelines on Privacy in the Private Health Sector* developed by the Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner. This means that your personal health information is kept private and secure.

This practice has a written policy on how your personal health information is handled and it is available to all patients for inspection.

Where do you store my 'personal health information'?

We store your personal health information in a computerised medical record. Your doctor will do his/her best to make sure that your medical record:

- Is accurate, comprehensive, well organised and legible;
- Is up to date;
- Has enough information to allow another doctor to care for you;
- Does not contain offensive or irrelevant comments about you;
- Contains a summary of your care; and
- Can be used to remind you, with your permission, to return for follow up, check ups and reviews.

Your doctor will only collect information that is relevant to your medical care. If you are uncertain as to why information is being requested, ask your doctor.

Providing your information to other doctors

The doctor(s) in this practice respect your right to decide how your personal health information is used or disclosed (for example to other doctors). In all but exceptional circumstances, personal information that identifies you will be sent to other people only with your consent. Gaining your consent is the guiding principle.

Sometimes it is important that other people are involved in your care, such as other doctors, and they are informed of relevant parts of your medical history so they can best care for you. After discussion with you, your doctor will write a letter to the other doctor, which will either be posted or given to you to take to them. If you have any concerns about this, discuss them with your doctor.

In most group practices, it is customary for all doctors in the practice to have access to all the medical records. If you have concerns about other doctors at this practice being able to access your records, discuss your concerns with your doctor.

Do you ever give my ‘personal health information’ to other people?

We consider that patients attending this practice expect that information provided will be used only to assist in managing their health care.

We also consider that patients would reasonably expect that selected personal health details will be disclosed to other health services directly involved in providing a health service to the individual.

Unless you would reasonably expect it, your doctor will not disclose your personal health information to a third party unless;

- You have consented to the disclosure;
- This disclosure is necessary because you are at risk of harm without treatment and you are unable to give consent. (i.e. you might be unconscious after an accident);
- Your doctor is legally obliged to disclose the information (i.e. notification of certain infectious diseases or suspected child abuse, or a subpoena or court order);
- The information is necessary to obtain Medicare payments or other health insurance rebates;
- This disclosure is necessary for the doctors in the practice to carry out a review of their practice for the purpose of improving the quality of care provided and the activity has been approved under Commonwealth or State legislation or by a medical College. This provides safeguards to protect the confidentiality of the information provided;
- There is an overriding public interest in the release of the information.

In any of the above cases only information necessary to achieve the objective will be given.

If you are concerned about any related use or disclosure of your personal health information you should speak to your GP.

How do I access my ‘personal health information’?

You have access to the information contained in your medical record. We believe that sharing information is important for good communication between you and your doctor and for good health care.

Information in your record can be provided to you by way of an accurate and up to date summary of your care, for instance if you are moving away and are transferring to a new doctor. Do not hesitate to ask your doctor if you want a summary of your care for any reason. If you request a summary or direct access to your full medical record, your doctor may need to take out any information provided by others on a confidential basis.

Your doctor will also need to consider the risk of any physical or mental harm to you or any other person, which may result from disclosure of your health information.

There are some circumstances in which access may be denied, however you will be advised of the reasons if this is the case. In most circumstances, however, your doctor will be pleased to provide a full explanation of the health summary or medical record provided.

A small but reasonable administration fee may be charged to provide such access as well as time with your doctor.

What happens if I feel that the information in my record is wrong?

If you find that the information in your record is not accurate, complete or up-to-date, you can request to have it corrected. The doctor may update it via a note or additional information in your record.

We don't recommend erasing information from your record as this may cause it to be incomplete.



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