RACGP
Royal Australian College *of* General Practitioners

Privacy and managing health information in general practice

Langwarrin Medical Clinic 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 (e.g. staff training).

What personal information do we collect?

The information we will collect about you includes your:

- 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 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 may collect your personal information in several different ways.

1. When you make your first appointment our practice staff will collect your personal and demographic information via your registration. Please see our Privacy Information Brochure attached to the patient registration form which states how we collect and use your personal information
2. During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information.

   Information can also be collected through electronic transfer of prescriptions (eTP), My Health Record, eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary.

   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 social media.
3. 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 Veterans' Affairs (as necessary).

When, why and with whom do we share your personal information?

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 eTP, My Health Record (eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).
  Only people who 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.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

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

eg as paper records, electronic records, visual records (X-rays, CT scans, videos and photos), audio recordings.

Our practice stores all personal information securely.

Personal information is stored securely eg electronic format, in protected information systems or in hard copy format in a secured environment. All electronic communication is via encrypted data and contains multiple password layers. Onsite records are stored in secure cabinets including confidentiality agreements for staff and contractors. Our IT is managed by an external provider who is not able to access practice data.

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, our receptionist can provide you with a personal details update form to change your personal information and will endeavor to update your record on the day of your visit.

You may request a summary of your health information a small processing fee to cover administration and postage of these requests apply. Provision of this information to a third party eg for Insurers will be discussed on an individual basis and consent and process documented in your clinical file.

Our practice will take reasonable steps to correct your personal information where the information is not accurate or up to date. We will regularly ask you to verify that your personal information held by our practice is correct and current. You may also request that we correct or update your information, and you should make such requests in writing to please ask reception for the appropriate form.

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. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure.

Our Privacy Officer is the Practice Manager Jodi Marchant, she can be contacted in writing or in person at Langwarrin Medical Clinic Vic 3910 or phone 03) 9789 0066.

You should expect an acknowledgment from the practice within 48 hours specifying the expected turnaround time for our response. You will receive a response to any and all identifiable feedback.

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 363 992

Policy review statement

This privacy policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur. Updates will be notified by signage in our waiting room, updates to our privacy brochures and via our website.

You may also receive a text regarding changes to our policies if you have nominated to be contacted this way.

Remember you may update your preferred method of contact at any time with our friendly staff.

Disclaimer

The *Privacy policy template for general practices* is intended for use as a guide of a general nature only and may or may not be relevant to particular practices or circumstances. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) has used its best endeavours to ensure the template is adapted for general practice to address current and anticipated future privacy requirements. Persons adopting or implementing its procedures or recommendations should exercise their own independent skill or judgement, or seek appropriate professional advice. While the template is directed to general practice, it does not ensure compliance with any privacy laws, and cannot of itself guarantee discharge of the duty of care owed to patients. Accordingly, the RACGP disclaims all liability (including negligence) to any users of the information contained in this template for any loss or damage (consequential or otherwise), cost or expense incurred or arising by reason of reliance on the template in any manner.

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