

# Practice Privacy Policy

## Policy

Australian Privacy Principles requires our practice to have a document that clearly sets out its policies on handling personal information, including health information.

This document, commonly called a privacy policy, outlines how we handle personal information collected (including health information) and how we protect the security of this information. It must be made available to anyone who asks for it and patients are made aware of this.

The collection statement informs patients about how their health information will be used including other organisations to which the practice usually discloses patient health information and any law that requires the particular information to be collected. Patient consent to the handling and sharing of patient health information should be provided at an early stage in the process of clinical care and patients should be made aware of the collection statement when giving consent to share health information.

In general, quality improvement or clinical audit activities for the purpose of seeking to improve the delivery of a particular treatment or service would be considered a directly related secondary purpose for information use or disclosure so we do not need to seek specific consent for this use of patients' health information, however we include information about quality improvement activities and clinical audits in the practice policy on managing health information. (Refer Section 8 Accreditation and Continuous Improvement)

## Procedure

We inform our patients about our practice's policies regarding the collection and management of their personal health information via:

- a sign at reception.
- brochure/s in the waiting area.
- our patient information sheet.
- new patient forms – 'Consent to share information'.
- verbally if appropriate.
- the practice website.

The privacy policy should outline:

- the practice's contact details.
- what information is collected.
- why information is collected.
- how the practice maintains the security of information held at the practice.
- the range of people within the practice team (e.g. GPs, general practice nurses, general practice registrars and students and allied health professionals), who may have access to patient health records and the scope of that access.
- the procedures for patients to gain access to their own health information on request.

- the way the practice gains patient consent before disclosing their personal health information to third parties.
- the process of providing health information to another medical practice should patients request that.
- the use of patient health information for quality assurance, research and professional development.
- the procedures for informing new patients about privacy arrangements.
- the way the practice addresses complaints about privacy related matters.
- the practice's policy for retaining patient health records.

A 'collection statement' sets out the following information:

- the identity of the practice and how to contact it.
- the fact that patients can access their own health information.
- the purpose for which the information is collected.
- other organisations to which the practice usually discloses patient health information.
- any law that requires the particular information to be collected (e.g. notifiable diseases).
- the main consequence for the individual if important health information is not provided.

Prior to a patient signing consent to the release of their health information patients are made aware they can request a full copy of our privacy policy and collection statement.

Patient consent for the transfer of health information to other providers or agencies is obtained on the first visit. A copy of our consent form is included below.

Once signed this form is scanned into the patient's record and its completion noted. Note: Consent for transfer of information differs from procedural consent.