

Privacy Brochure

Introduction

This leaflet aims to explain clearly how personal information (which includes your health record) about you is collected and used within our practice, and the circumstances in which we may share it with third parties.

This practice follows the guidelines of the “Handbook for the Management of Health Information in Private Medical Practice”. The Handbook was produced by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Committee of Presidents of Medical Colleges with the support of the General Practice Computing Group. The Handbook incorporates the provisions of Federal and State Privacy Legislation. This means that your personal health information is kept private and secure

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.

Your Personal Information

Your doctor needs information about your past and present health in order to provide you with high quality care. This practice will make sure that you are able to discuss your health with your doctor in private.

The personal information we will collect about you may include 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.

Your Medical Record

Your Medical Record is a digital record of your medical information (medical history, care or treatments received, test results, diagnoses, and medications taken). Your doctor will do their best to ensure that your medical record:

- is accurate, comprehensive, well-organised and legible
- is up to date
- contains enough information to allow another doctor to care for you;
- does not contain offensive or irrelevant comments about you;
- includes a summary of your care; and
- can be used to remind you, with your consent, to return for follow up, check ups and reviews.

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

How do we collect your personal information?

Our practice may collect your personal information in several different ways:

- When you make your first appointment we collect your personal and demographic information during the registration process.
- We may collect further personal information such as from electronic transfer of prescriptions (eScript) or My Health Record (Shared Health Summary)
- When you visit our website, send us an email or SMS, telephone us, make an online appointment or communicate with us using social media.
- From other sources when it is not practical or reasonable to collect it from you directly. This may include information from:
 - your guardian or responsible person
 - other healthcare providers, e.g specialists, allied health, hospitals, community health and pathology/diagnostic imaging services
 - Medicare or Department of Veterans' Affairs (as necessary).

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

We sometimes share your personal information:

- with other healthcare providers
- 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 Australian Privacy Principles and this policy
- 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, such as electronic transfer of prescriptions (eScripts) and My Health Record (Shared Health 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.

Our practice management software enables your doctor to automatically populate relevant information into outgoing documents that provides the receiver the necessary information for your continued care including, but not limited to referrals, pathology requests and letters.

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.

Our practice may use your 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 secure, patients cannot be identified and the information is stored within Australia. You can let our reception staff know if you do not want your information included and this will be flagged on your electronic patient file.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Our practice stores all personal information securely in your electronic patient file in our Practice Management Software and is protected from unauthorised access through advanced Virus, Malware & Ransomware protection. All doctors, nurses and non-clinical staff sign confidentiality and privacy agreements.

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.

Your Access to and Correcting your Health Information

You have the right to request access to, and correction of, your personal information contained in your medical record. Our practice acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. We require you to put this request in writing and give it to

your doctor, the reception staff or email it to reception@wsqp.com.au and our practice will respond within a reasonable time; no longer than 30 days. Depending on what is involved, you may be asked to contribute to the cost of providing the information.

You may also ask your doctor for a summary of your health care; we believe that sharing information is important for good communication between you and your doctor and for good health care.

You can request that we correct or update your information, and you should make such requests in writing to the Practice Manager at reception@wsqp.com.au or speak to your doctor. 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 current.

Lodging and Resolving a Privacy-Related Complaint

We take complaints and concerns regarding privacy seriously. You should express any privacy concerns you may have in writing or discuss these with your doctor. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure. Inaccurate information will be corrected, or your concerns noted in your record. For legal reasons, the original notes will be retained. We endeavour to resolve any complaint or answer concerns within 30 days.

Walker Street General Practice
9/2A Walker Street, Bowral NSW 2576
02 4861 3855
reception@wsqp.com.au
www.wsqp.com.au

If we cannot satisfactorily resolve your concern or complaint, you may wish to contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (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 at 1300 363 992.

You may also contact the Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner (1300 363 992) or the Office of the NSW Privacy Commissioner (02 9268 5588).

Policy Review

This is current as of January 2024 and will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur. Any changes will be updated here.