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Privacy Policy

We are committed to protecting the privacy of patient information and to handling your personal information in a responsible manner in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), the Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012, the Australian Privacy Principles and relevant State and Territory privacy legislation (referred to as privacy legislation).

This privacy policy explains how we collect, use and disclose your personal information, how you may access that information and how you may seek the correction of any information. It also explains how you may complain about a breach of privacy legislation.

This Privacy Policy is current as of September 2024.

Why and when is your consent necessary

When you register as a patient at our practice, you provide consent for our GPs and practice staff to access and use your personal information so that we can provide you with Health Care Services. 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.

Collection

We collect information in various ways, such as in person, new patient Registration form, over the phone, in writing or over the internet if you get in touch with us online. This information may be collected by medical, and administration staff.

In emergency situations we may also need to collect information from your relatives, friends, or other sources, when we are unable to obtain your express consent.

We are required by law to retain medical records for certain periods of time depending on your age at the time we provide services.

Your medical records

The Practice will need to collect personal information as a provision of clinical services to a patient at the practice and it is necessary for us to maintain files pertaining to patient health.

A patient's personal information may be held at the Practice in various forms:

- As paper records
- As electronic records

The files may contain the following types of information:

- Patient name, address, telephone number and Medicare and Veterans Affairs (for identification and claiming purposes), Health Care card or Pension numbers and health fund details
- Individual Healthcare identifiers
- Information for the purpose of providing electronic prescriptions (eTP)
- Date of birth
- Current and previous medical history including medications, allergies, adverse events, immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors.
- The name of any health service provider or medical specialist to whom the patient is referred,

copies of any letters of referral and reports back.

- Current treatments or medicines used by the patient
- Your ethnic background
- Any additional information relating to you that you provide to us.

This practice takes steps to ensure that your medical records:

- are accurate, complete, well-organised and legible
- are up-to-date
- contain enough information to allow another GP to care for you
- contain a summary of your care
- can be used to remind you, with your permission, to return for follow up, check-ups and reviews.

Use and Disclosure

We will treat your personal information as strictly private and confidential. We will only use or disclose it for purposes directly related to your care and treatment, or in ways that you would reasonably expect that we may use it for your ongoing care and treatment. For example, on request forms for pathology or x-rays, or disclosure of test results to your specialist.

There are circumstances where we may be permitted or required by law to disclose your personal information to third parties.

- Other health Care providers
- Third parties who work with our practice for business purposes (such as IT providers and accreditation agencies)
- Statutory requirement to lawfully share certain personal information such as mandatory notification of certain diseases.
- Court subpoenas required or authorised by law.
- When necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to a patient's life, health or safety or public safety or it is impractical to obtain the patient's consent
- For the purpose of confidential dispute resolution process
- To assist in locating a missing person
- To establish, exercise or defend an equitable claim
- During the course of providing medical services, through electronic transfer of prescriptions (eTP), or My Health Record system

Our practice software has inbuilt automatic referral letter templates to other health care providers. Only the necessary health information is transmitted to the letter. We impose security and confidentiality requirements on how outside contractors handle your personal information. Outside contractors are required not to use information about you for any purpose except for those activities we have asked them to perform.

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.

Overseas Transfer

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

Security and Storage

Your information is stored as electronic records on our computer system.

Your personal information that we hold is protected by:

Securing our own premises; plus, our location in a building whose access is secured after hours, and our rooms have a fully monitored back to base alarm system

Electronic records are password protected. Varying levels of access is used to limit unauthorised access interference, modification and disclosure.

Our staff are required to sign a confidentiality agreement and are aware that any breach of this agreement has extremely serious consequences

Access and correction of your personal information

You have the right to access and correct personal information that we hold about you.

We may deny access to your medical records in certain circumstances permitted by law, for example, if disclosure may cause a serious threat to your health or safety. We will always tell you why access is denied and the options you have to respond to our decision.

Our practice will take responsible steps to correct your personal information where the information is not accurate or up to date. We will ask you at different times, to verify your information held by our practice is correct and up to date.

If you wish to access or correct your personal information, we request that you put in writing and contact the Practice Manager (Email: info@familycaregp.com.au). Your request for access and/or correction will be processed within 30 days.

Complaints

If you have a complaint about the privacy of your personal information, we request that you contact our Practice Manager in writing. Upon receipt of a complaint, we will consider the details and attempt to resolve it in accordance with our complaints handling procedures. You should provide us with sufficient details regarding your complaint together with any supporting information. We will take steps to investigate the issue and will notify you in writing of the outcome within 30 days from the receipt date of original written complaint.

If you are dissatisfied with our handling of a complaint or the outcome you may make an application to the Australian Information Commissioner by calling 1300 363 992 or at www.oaic.gov.au or the Privacy Commissioner in your State or Territory.

Dealing with us anonymously

In accordance with Australian Privacy Principle 2, 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 requested or authorized by law to only deal with identified individuals.

Policy review statement

This policy is reviewed regularly and is available for you at the reception and also on our website.

This policy has been prepared according to RACGP guidelines in conjunction with Australian Privacy Principles.

Policy review date: Jan 2025.