

Privacy Policy

Current as of: *January 2023. Review date January 2024*

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.

What personal information do we collect?

The information we will collect about you includes:

- names, date of birth, addresses, contact details, emergency 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 will collect your personal information:

1. When you make your first appointment our practice staff will collect your personal and demographic information via your registration.
2. During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information. Other methods we receive information are “myhealth record” electronic downloads from hospital or pathology.
3. We may also collect your personal information when you, send us an email, telephone us, make an appointment or communicate with us in writing.
4. 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 Veteran's Affairs (as necessary).

Who do we share your personal information with?

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 (e.g. 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 (e.g. some diseases require mandatory notification)
- during the course of providing medical services, through Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions (eTP), MyHealth Record (e.g. via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).
Sending referrals on your behalf

Only people that 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.

We will email patients identifying information or clinical information once we have received a confirmation email with your details authorizing us to do so.

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.

- Electronic records, paper files are archived, and visual x-rays, and scans

Our practice stores all personal information securely.

- Access is by password. Staff and contractors have confidentiality agreements in place. State of the art IT security and software.

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 and our practice will respond within a reasonable time. We will then contact you to make an appointment for access to records in consultation with your doctor. There will be a fee applicable to the time spent. Patients are also able to request/authorize for a copy of their medical records to be sent to another doctor or specialist using the Transfer of Medical Records form the provider.

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 your personal information held by our practice is correct and up-to-date. You may also request that we correct or update your information, and you should make such requests in writing to Practice Manager.

Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)

The Alice Street General Practice has CCTV systems operating at our premises for the purposes of maintaining safety and security for our patients, visitors, staff and other attendees. Our CCTV system may collect and store personal information and the use of our CCTV will be in accordance with the Privacy Act. CCTV is only used to monitor public areas.

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 the complaint in accordance with our resolution procedure. Please address details of your privacy related complaint or concern to the Practice Principal at the practice address – Alice Street General Practice, 6 Alice Street, Newtown, NSW, 2042. Or phone the practice on 02 9550 6201 for a confidential discussion of your privacy related complaint or concern with the Practice Manager. The turnaround timeframe for complaint resolution is 30 days.

Complaints can also be registered via the following agencies:-

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). Generally the OAIC will require you to give them time to respond, before they will investigate.

Phone: 1300 363 992

Email: enquiries@oaic.gov.au

Fax: +61 2 9284 9666

Post: GPO Box 5218 Sydney NSW 2001

Website: www.oaic.gov.au/individuals/how-do-i-make-a-privacy-complaint

NSW Government Health Care Complaints Commission -1800 043 159.

<http://www.hccc.nsw.gov.au/Complaints/>

NSW Ombudsman

Inquiries team – 9286 1000

<http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/complaints/complaint-form>

Privacy and our website

We do not collect personal information from our website. Email correspondence received from you will be kept on our database.