

Family Doctor Service

PRIVACY POLICY

Collection

It is necessary for us to collect personal information from patients and sometimes others associated with their health care to attend to their health needs and for associated administrative purposes.

Use & Disclosure

A patient's personal health information is used or disclosed for purposes directly related to their health care and in ways that are consistent with a patient's expectations. In the interests of the highest quality and continuity of health care this may include sharing information with other health care providers who comprise a patient's medical team from time to time. In addition, there are circumstances when information must be disclosed with patient consent, such as:

- Emergency situations
- Disclosure by doctors, by law, of information sometimes required for public interest reasons, eg mandatory reporting of some communicable diseases.
- Disclosure of information about a patient to fulfil a medical indemnity insurance obligation
- Provision of information to Medicare or private health funds, if relevant, for billing and medical rebate purposes.
- Assessment of medical records by a visiting doctor for quality review and accreditation the practice.

In general, a patient's health information will not be used for any other purposes without their consent. There are some necessary purposes of collection for which information will be used beyond providing health care, such as professional accreditation, quality assessments, clinical auditing, billing and so forth.

Data Quality

The storage, use and, where necessary, transfer of personal health information will be undertaken in a secure manner that protects patient privacy. It is necessary for medical practices to keep patient information after a patients' last attendance for as long is required by law or is prudent having regard to administrative requirements.

Openness

Our practice makes this policy available to patients. On request this practice will let patients know, generally, what sort of personal information we hold, for what purposes, and how we collect, hold, use and disclose that information.

Access and correction

Patients may request access to their personal health information held by this practice. Where necessary, patient will be given the opportunity to amend any incorrect personal information that is held. There are some circumstances in which access is restricted, and in these cases reasons for denying access will be explained. A charge may be payable where the practice incurs costs in providing access. This practice acknowledges the right of children to privacy of their health information. Based on the professional judgment of the doctor and consistent with the law, it might at times be necessary to restrict access to personal health information by parents and guardians. Upon request, and with patient's consent, a patient's health information held by this practice will be made available to another health provider.

Identifiers

These are numbers, letter or symbols that are used to identify patients with or without the use of a name (e.g., Medicare numbers). We will limit the use of identifiers assigned to patients by Commonwealth Government agencies to those uses necessary to fulfil our obligation to those agencies.

Anonymity

A patient has a right to be dealt with anonymously, provided this is lawful and practicable. However, in the medical context this is not likely to be practicable or possible for Medicare and insurance rebate purposes. It could also be dangerous to the patient's health.

Transborder Data Flow

An individual's privacy is protected Australia-wide by privacy laws. We will take steps to protect patient privacy if information is to be sent interstate or outside Australia.

Sensitive Information

Health information is "sensitive information" for the purposes of privacy legislation. This means that generally patients' consent will be sought to collect health information that is necessary to make an accurate medical diagnosis, prescribe appropriate treatment and to be proactive in-patient health care.