

## Privacy Policy

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### Introduction

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 make a complaint about a breach of privacy legislation.

This Privacy Policy is current from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023, and is reviewed annually. From time to time we may make changes to our policy, processes and systems in relation to how we handle your personal information. We will update this Privacy Policy to reflect any changes. Those changes will be available on our website and in the practice.

### Collection

We collect information that is necessary and relevant to provide you with medical care and treatment, and manage our medical practice. This information may include your name, address, date of birth, gender, health information, family history and contact details. This information may be stored on our computer medical records system and/or in handwritten medical records.

Wherever practicable we will only collect information from you personally. However, we may also need to collect information from other sources such as treating specialists, radiologists, pathologists, hospitals, other health care providers, and the Myhealth record system.

We collect information in various ways, such as over the phone, or in writing, in person in our practice. This information may be collected by medical and non-medical staff.

In emergency situations we may also need to collect information from your relatives or friends.

We are required by law to retain medical records of inactive patients until the patient has reached the age of **25 years** or for a minimum of seven years from the time of last contact - whichever is the longer.

### 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, the disclosure of blood test results to your specialist or requests for x-rays.

There are circumstances where we may be permitted or required by law to disclose your personal information to third parties. For example, to Medicare, Police, insurers, solicitors, government regulatory bodies, tribunals, courts of law, hospitals, debt collection agents, the electronic transfer of prescriptions service or to the Myhealth record system. We may also from time to time provide statistical data to third parties for research purposes.

We may disclose information about you to outside contractors to carry out activities on our behalf such as an IT service provider, solicitor or debt collection agent. We impose security and confidentiality requirements on how they 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.

## **Data Quality and Security**

We will take reasonable steps to ensure that your personal information is accurate, complete, up to date and relevant. For this purpose, our staff may ask you to confirm that your contact details are correct when you attend a consultation. We request that you let us know if any of the information we hold about you is incorrect or out of date.

Personal information that we hold is protected by:

- securing our premises;
- placing passwords and varying access levels on databases to limit access and protect electronic information from unauthorised interference, access, modification and disclosure; and

## **Corrections**

If you believe that the information, we have about you is not accurate, complete or up to date, we ask that you advise our administration staff or contact us in writing (see details below).

## **Access**

You are entitled to request access to your medical records. We request that you put your request in writing and we will respond to it within a reasonable time.

There may be a fee for the administrative costs of retrieving and providing you with copies of your medical records.

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.

## **Complaints**

If you have a complaint about the privacy of your personal information (including complaints about our use of the Myhealth record system), we request that you contact us in writing. Upon receipt of a complaint we will consider the details and attempt to resolve it in accordance with our complaints handling procedures.

If you are dissatisfied with our handling of a complaint or the outcome you may make an application to the Victorian Health Services Commissioner: Level 30, 570 Bourke Street Melbourne, VIC 3000

## **Overseas Transfer of Data**

We will not transfer your personal information to an overseas recipient unless we have your consent or we are required to do so by law.

## **Contact**

Please direct any queries, complaints, requests for access to medical records to:

The Practice Manager  
The Highton Clinic  
10A Bellevue Avenue  
Highton, VIC 3216