

Unanderra Family Practice

Privacy Policy

Introduction

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, and business processes (e.g. staff training).

What personal information do we collect?

The information we will collect about you includes 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.

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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 authorized by law to only deal with identified individuals.

How do we collect your personal information?

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

When you make your first appointment our practice staff will collect your personal and demographic information via your registration.

During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information.

We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email or SMS, telephone us, make an online appointment or communicate with us using social media.

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 Veterans' Affairs (as necessary).

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

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 (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

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- when there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (eg some diseases require mandatory notification)
- during the course of providing medical services, through eTP, My Health Record (eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary, AIR).

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.

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

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. Such as paper records, electronic records, visual records (X-rays, CT scans).

Our practice stores all personal information securely.

Paper Records – Our paper records are all stored within the Reception/Administration area. No patients are permitted within this area. We have patient file cards kept in filing reels, hard copies of pathology/radiology, Workers Compensation forms kept in filing cabinets and cupboards. Prescriptions/referrals awaiting patient pick up are also kept within the reception area.

Electronic Records – All electronic records are kept securely within our Profile system. Incoming information via Email, Fax and external providers is all printed and scanned securely into the system then the hard copies are destroyed. We have computer security systems in place, monitored by our IT provider and each employee has individual passwords which are changed every 3 months to ensure security.

Confidentiality statements are signed by each staff member upon employment commencement and copies are kept on the premises. This also includes all our contracted external service providers e.g. Cleaners, Maintenance Providers, IT etc.

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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 have specific forms kept on file for these requests and require patients to fill them out and return to us before any records are released. The practice will complete these requests within a timely manner, within 30 days being our general timeframe. No fees are incurred by the patient for these requests.

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. You may also request that we correct or update your information, and you should make such requests in writing to Reception or Practice Administration staff. We have forms available for patients to complete to advise the practice of any general information requiring updating.

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 it in accordance with our resolution procedure.

All complaints made by patients should be forwarded to the practice;

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Email: pmanager@ufp.net.au

We have designated complaint forms kept within the waiting room and reception area for patients to complete in surgery as well. Verbal complaints made via telephone conversation are all transferred to the practice Manager, and are then documented and all details are recorded within our Complaints/Incidents Folder.

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Once complaints have been submitted, either verbally or written, patients are given an estimated time frame of the handling process, generally within 30 days, and the complaints are then forwarded on to the Practice principles for review and action. Patients will also be supplied with a completed 'Acknowledgement of complaint form'.

You may also contact the 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 on 1300 363 992.

Policy review statement

This privacy policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur.

We will notify patients when we amend our policy through written correspondence.

Disclaimer

The *Privacy policy template for general practices* is intended for use as a guide of a general nature only and may or may not be relevant to particular practices or circumstances. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) has used its best endeavors to ensure the template is adapted for general practice to address current and anticipated future privacy requirements. Persons adopting or implementing its procedures or recommendations should exercise their own independent skill or judgement, or seek appropriate professional advice. While the template is directed to general practice, it does not ensure compliance with any privacy laws, and cannot of itself guarantee discharge of the duty of care owed to patients. Accordingly, the RACGP disclaims all liability (including negligence) to any users of the information contained in this template for any loss or damage (consequential or otherwise), cost or expense incurred or arising by reason of reliance on the template in any manner.

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