



3A/2320 Silverdale Road
PO Box 177
SILVERDALE NSW 2752
Phone: (02) 4742 2011 Fax: (02) 47422 0010
service@littlegemmedical.com.au
www.littlegemmedical.com.au

PRIVACY POLICY

In order to provide professional and thorough medical care, Little Gem Medical (LGM) will need to attain, record and update patient information including personal information and medical history. This information is vital in providing a quality, safe and timely service. By attending the practice, a patient will need to agree to our terms, and privacy policy.

Why and when patient consent is necessary

When a patient is registered with LGM, they provide consent for GPs and practice staff to access and use their personal information to provide the best possible healthcare. Only staff who need to see personal information will have access to it. Patient registration also requires consent for de-identified patient health information to be utilised by third parties (via the primary health network only) for the purposes of quality improvement and clinical audit activities.

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 personal information?

LGM needs to collect personal information to provide healthcare services to a patient. The main purpose for collecting, using and sharing personal information is to manage health. It is also used for directly related business activities, such as financial claims and payments, practice audits and accreditation, business processes (eg staff training) and quality improvement activities. Examples include

- a. Disclosure to healthcare providers outside of the practice including (but not limited to) – Specialists, Public & Private Hospitals, Nurses, Community Health Services, Allied Health and other providers.
- b. Disease Notification to Public Health Units as required by legislative or regulatory requirements.
- c. Screening Activities – For example National Pap Test Register
- d. Billing (including Medicare, Health Insurance Commission, Workcover and Banking)
- e. Continuous Improvement – including accreditation, audit, safety and training.
- f. Recalls and Reminders – sent back to you via SMS, Email, Phone or Letter to facilitate ongoing healthcare.

What personal information is collected?

The information collected about a patient includes:

- 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

Dealing with Little Gem anonymously

Patients have the right to deal with LGM anonymously or under a pseudonym unless it is impracticable to do so or unless it is required or authorised by law to only deal with identified individuals.

How does Little Gem collect patient personal information?

Our practice will collect your personal information:

- At the first appointment practice staff will collect the patient's personal and demographic information via registration.
- During the course of providing medical services, LGM may collect further personal information.
- LGM may also collect personal information when the patient sends us an email, telephone, or communicates 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:
 - A guardian or responsible person
 - Other involved healthcare providers, such as specialists, allied health professionals, hospitals, community health services and pathology and diagnostic imaging services
 - The Patient's health fund, Medicare, or the Department of Veteran's Affairs (as necessary).

Sharing Personal Information

LGM sometimes share personal information:

- with third parties who work with the 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
- when there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (eg some diseases require mandatory notification)

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.

When providing medical information in referral letters, the Practice utilises Practice Management software to populate only relevant details to other providers. These are reviewed and edited by the practitioner before they are sent.

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



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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.

We may provide De-identified data to other organisations to improve population health outcomes. The information is secure, patients cannot be identified and the information is stored in Australia. Patients may opt out of this by advising the reception staff if they don't want their information included.

Who has access to your Information? – All Staff (Reception, Management, Nurses and Doctors) are fully briefed about patient privacy and are subject to this policy and RACGP Standards. Staff are re-educated on this policy periodically. Any breaches by staff are considered very serious and may lead to termination. Clinical (Medical) information has limited access.

How do we store and protect personal information?

Personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms. [e.g. as paper records, as electronic records, as visual (X-rays, CT scans, videos and photos), as audio recordings.]

Our practice stores all personal information securely.

- Electronic format: Files are stored securely in a Practice Management System, and encryption and passwords that are changed regularly. Our systems comply with RACGP standards and Australian Privacy Legislation.
- Hard Copy format: in a secured environment. Please note: All staff and contractors are required to sign confidentiality agreements.
- Disposal of Paper Records – All paper records that are required for the long term record will be scanned and kept electronically. All paper will be shredded onsite.

Our Practice may utilise a real-time recording program to assist with the capturing of notes during the consult. This program is editable by the practitioner and the details are immediately removed once the notes are completed so no duplicates are available. If the Practitioner wishes to use this program during the consult, they will obtain your consent prior to doing so.

Accessing and correcting personal information at our practice

All patients have the right to access their medical record held by LGM in conforming with the Privacy Act 1988 and Australian Privacy Principles (APPs).

Patients may access their record by: -

- Asking to view the record at the time of a consultation in the presence of the doctor,
- Requesting a full or partial copy (hardcopy) from LGM or
- Requesting that the health record be transferred to a new treating doctor (external to LGM).

Note that some results and reports are not able to be released by the practice to third parties. It is not usual practice for medical records to be given directly to patients but this may be negotiated between the doctor and the patient.

The record will be reviewed by a doctor prior to release. Some information may be withheld if it could impact the ongoing health of a patient.



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What is in a patient health record?

Patient health records will contain the following information:

- Date of consultation
- Who conducted the consultation (eg by initials in the notes, or by audit trail in an electronic record)
- Method of communication (eg face to face, email, telephone or other electronic means)
- Patient's reason for consultation
- Relevant clinical findings including history, examinations and investigations
- Allergies
- Diagnosis (if appropriate)
- Recommended management plan and, where appropriate, expected process of review
- Any medicines prescribed for the patient (including the name, strength, directions for use, dose, frequency, number of repeats and date on which the patient started/ceased/changed the medication)
- Patient consent for the presence of a third party brought in by the practice (eg a medical student)
- Record of patient emails (if applicable)

How can a privacy related complaint be made and how will the complaint be handled?

Complaints and concerns regarding privacy are taken very seriously. You should express any privacy concerns you may have in writing to: Practice Manager, Little Gem Medical 3A 2320 Silverdale Rd Silverdale NSW 2752 or via email at Natalie@littlegemmedical.com.au.

We will attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure within 30 days.

You may also contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). Generally the OAIC will require time to respond, before they will investigate. For further information visit www.oaic.gov.au or call the OAIC on 1300 336 002. Alternatively you can access the Health Care Complaints Commission; 1800 043 159 www.hccc.nsw.gov.au

Policy review statement

This privacy policy will be reviewed in **August 2025** to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur. If any changes are made, patients will be notified via various channels such as a sign at reception, facebook post or text message.