



Balnarring Medical Centre 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.

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 may collect your personal information in several different ways.

1. When you make your first appointment our practice staff will collect your personal and demographic information via your registration. We will also ask you at times to update this information if there are any changes.
2. During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information. Information can also be collected through My Health Record and electronic transfer of prescriptions (eTP),
3. 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.
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 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 Australian Privacy Principles (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 processes
- 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 prescriptions (eTPs), My Health Record (e.g., via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).

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.

Our practice may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services we offer to our patients through research and analysis of our patient data.

We may provide de-identified data to other organisations, including South Eastern Primary Health Network (SEMPHN), to improve population health outcomes. The information is secure, patients cannot be identified and the information is stored within Australia. You can let our reception staff know if you do not want your information included.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms. Information is stored in electronic records, visual records (e.g., x-rays, CT scans, videos and photos) and older paper records.

Our practice stores all personal information securely. Electronic records are backed up daily and password protected. Paper records are held in secure areas. All staff comply with confidentiality principles and confidentiality agreements are in place for all staff and contractors.

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 addressed to the Practice Manager at:

Balnarring Medical Centre
50 Balnarring Road
Balnarring
Victoria 3926.

Our practice will respond within 30 days.

Fees will be charged to cover reasonable costs of providing these records (as permitted under Health Records Act 2001). The Health Records act also details the timeframes in which we will respond to your request.

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 addressed to the Practice Manager, Balnarring Medical Centre, 50 Balnarring Road, Balnarring, Victoria 3926.

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, addressed to the Practice Manager at:

Balnarring Medical Centre
50 Balnarring Road, Balnarring
Victoria 3926
Tel 03 5983 1355

We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure, and will respond to you within 30 days.

You may also contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (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.

Privacy and our website

Information about Balnarring Medical Centre is available on our website including information on privacy and a copy of our Privacy Policy.

Our website uses cookies, which may collect your personal information to allow us to more effectively provide information to you through our website and to allow us to perform website analytics. You are able to opt out of using cookies when entering our website.

We may collect your personal information when you provide it to social media accounts administered by us through your choice to follow our account/s and interact with our account through comments, likes or other actions available to you. We may use this information to provide responses to your queries and/or to assist in provision or improvement of our service.

Policy review statement

This policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently if required and any updated versions will be available from the practice or on our website.