



JAMES STREET MEDICAL CENTRE

PRIVACY POLICY

This practice is bound by the Federal Privacy Act (1988) and the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) and also complies with the Victorian Health Records Act (2001). **James Street Medical Centre** recognises the importance of protecting the privacy and the rights of individuals in relation to their personal information.

James Street Medical Centre will always comply with privacy obligations when collecting personal information from third-party sources. This includes ensuring transparency with patients, obtaining necessary consents, maintaining data accuracy, securing the information, and using it only for specified purposes.

This document outlines how we collect and manage your health information.

What is your personal information?

Personal information is information that identifies you or could reasonably identify you. Personal health information, a particular subset of personal information can include any information collected and held to provide a health service. Our privacy policy covers all the people who use our services or otherwise provide their personal information to us.

When and why is your Consent necessary?

When you register and attend as a patient of **James Street Medical Centre**, you provide consent for our GPs and practice staff to access and use your personal information in a way that ensures you receive the best possible healthcare. Your consent will be obtained from you by completing the “patient registration form” either in person at our practice, or via the online form available via AutoMed.

Additional consent (secondary purpose) may be required for specific consultations such as treatment room procedures.

Access to your personal information is restricted to practice team members who require it for your care. If we ever use your personal information for purposes other than outlined in this document, we will obtain additional consent from you.

It is important to us that as our patient, you understand why we collect and use your personal information. By acknowledging this Privacy Policy you consent to us collecting, holding, using, retaining and disclosing your personal information in the manners described below.

For what purpose do we collect, hold, use and disclose your personal information?

- To provide medical services and treatment for you
- For administrative and billing purposes
- Update our records and keep your details up to date
- To process and respond to any complaints made
- To comply with any law, rules and regulations
- For the purpose of data research and analysis
- For inclusion in a recall register for prevention of chronic disease
- For the purpose of reporting back to your employer
- To answer any queries about the services we provide to you
- To provide information to third parties with your consent

- To meet the obligations of notification to our medical defense organisations or insurers

Additionally, we may utilise your information for internal quality and safety improvement processes such as practice audits, accreditation purposes, and staff training to maintain high-quality service standards.

What personal information do we collect and hold?

The information **James Street Medical Centre** collects including medical details, family information, name, address, employment or other demographic data, Immunisation history, identified allergies and their adverse reactions and observations, past and current medical and social history, current health issues and future medical care, Medicare number, account details and any health information such as medical or personal opinions about a person's, disability or health status. All information documented in the patient health record is collated by the individual and all healthcare professionals providing care and is used for continuity of care.

We may also collect some information that is not considered personal information as it does not identify you or anyone else. For example, we may collect de-identified responses to patient feedback surveys.

How do we collect your personal information?

- Directly from you when you attend our clinics
- As disclosed by you during your consultation at our clinic

In some circumstances, personal information may also be collected from other sources, including:

- 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 (if relevant).
- While providing medical services, further personal information may be collected via:
 - Electronic prescribing
 - My Health Record
 - Online appointments.

Various types of images may be collected and used, including:

- **CCTV footage:** Collected from our premises for security and safety purpose
- **Photos and medical images:** These can be taken using personal devices for medical purposes, following the guidelines outlined in our guide on using personal devices for medical images.

What happens if we can't collect your personal information?

If you do not provide us with the personal information described above, the following may happen:

- **James Street Medical Centre** may not be able to provide the requested service to you
- Your diagnosis or treatment may be inaccurate or incomplete

Who do we disclose your information to?

- Personal information will only be used for the purpose of providing medical services and for claims and payments, unless consented otherwise

- Disclosure may occur to third parties engaged by the practice or for business purposes e.g. accreditation
- **James Street Medical Centre** will inform the patient where there is a statutory requirement to disclose personal information (e.g. mandatory reporting of certain diseases)
- The practice will not disclose personal information to any third party other than those related to providing our medical services unless consent is obtained
- **James Street Medical Centre** will not disclose personal information to anyone outside Australia without need and without patient consent.

Exceptions to disclose without patient consent are where the information is:

- Required by law
- 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 a confidential dispute resolution process.

Will your information be used for marketing purpose?

James Street Medical Centre does not use or disclose the information we collect about you for direct marketing unless an exception applies, including where the individual either consents to the disclosure or has a reasonable expectation that their personal information will be used for direct marketing, and the organisation notifies the individual on how to 'opt out' of direct marketing communications. Direct marketing communications from **James Street Medical Centre** may include information about our products and services and may be in the form of email, SMS, fax and mail.

How is your information used to improve services?

James Street Medical Centre The practice may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services offered to patients through research, analysis of patient data for quality improvement and for training activities with the practice team

We may provide de-identified data to other organisations to improve population health outcomes. If we provide this information to other organisations patients cannot be identified from the information we share, the information is secure and is stored within Australia. You can let reception staff know if you do not want your de-identified information included.

At times, general practices are approached by research teams to recruit eligible patients into specific studies which require access to identifiable information. You may be approached by a member of our practice team to participate in research. Researchers will not approach you directly without your express consent having been provided to the practice. If you provide consent, you would then receive specific information on the research project and how your personal health information will be used, at which point you can decide to participate or not participate in the research project.

How are documented automation technologies used?

Document automation is where systems use existing data to generate electronic documents relating to medical conditions and healthcare.

James Street Medical Centre uses document automation technologies to create documents such as referrals, which are sent to other healthcare providers. These documents contain only your relevant medical information.

These document automation technologies are used through secure medical software BestPractice.

All users of the medical software have their own unique user credentials and password and can only

access information that is relevant to their role in the practice team.

The practice complies with the Australian privacy legislation and APPs to protect your information.

All data, both electronic and paper are stored and managed in accordance with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners [Privacy and managing health information guidance](#).

How can you access and correct your personal information?

James Street Medical Centre acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. Patients are encouraged to make this request in writing, and **James Street Medical Centre** will respond within a reasonable time. **James Street Medical Centre** will take reasonable steps to correct your personal information where the information is not accurate or up to date. From time to time, **James Street Medical Centre** will ask patients to verify their personal information to ensure it is accurate and up to date. Patients may also request this information to be corrected / updated in writing.

Security

James Street Medical Centre takes all the reasonable steps to ensure that your personal information is protected from loss and misuse. Your personal information may be stored at **James Street Medical Centre** in various forms, primarily as electronic records but also as paper records for limited periods.

When your personal information is no longer needed it is destroyed or de-identified.

James Street Medical Centre complies with the RACGP's "*Information Security in General Practice*" guidelines.

Contacting us

If you have any questions about this privacy policy, any concerns or complaints regarding the treatment of your privacy or a possible breach of your privacy please contact **Tracy DeCerff** (Practice Manager) on **(03) 97931962** or email to reception@jamesstreetmedicalcentre.com.au. Your requests and complaints will be treated confidentially. Our practice representative will contact you within a reasonable time after receiving your complaint to discuss your concerns and your options. If you feel the clinic cannot resolve your complaint / concern, please contact the **Office of the Health Services Commissioner on 1300 582 113** or email hsc@health.vic.gov.au.

Policy Review Statement

This policy is reviewed annually and updated as required. Any updated versions of this privacy policy will be notified to patients on our noticeboard and our patient information brochure.