

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).

Accuracy of personal health information

We endeavor to keep your information as up-to-date as possible to ensure the best outcome for you. If you believe that your details or the information we have on record has changed since your last visit, please let us know.

What happens if you don't provide the information?

You can decline to have your health information used in all or some of the way outlined in this document, but it may influence our ability to manage your health care to provide the best health outcome for you.

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

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?

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

2. During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information.
3. We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email, or telephone us.
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?

- 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 process
- 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 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.

Use of de-identified patient information in quality improvement activities

Doctors at this practice use Pen CS Software to help provide you with the best medical care.

This practice, like others around Australia, securely shares patient health information (that is not identifiable) with Primary Health Networks, to improve health services in this area.

If you have any questions or wish to opt out, please ask reception.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms, such as electronic records, medical imaging, and scanned paper records.

Our practice stores all personal information securely. All staff and any contractors that may come into contact with your personal health information are bound by confidentiality agreements to protect and maintain your privacy.

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 will respond to your request within 30 days. An administrative fee will be involved for access to your records. This is not claimable under Medicare or Health Funds.

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.

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. Please address your concerns to:

Practice Manager
Patrick Street Family Practice
8-22 Patrick Street
Stawell VIC 3380

The Practice Manager will endeavor to respond within 30 days.

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.

Privacy and our website

The contact information you provide is collected when you contact us via our website (www.psfamprac.com.au), only to allow us to respond to you.

Privacy of communication via email

We do not use email for the purpose of sharing patient health information. Emails are only to be used for correspondence of a non-sensitive nature.

Patrick Street Family Practice uses Argus secure messaging to send referrals to recipients who have Argus installed.

Policy review statement

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure we comply with any changes required. Updated policies will be published on our website (www.psfamprac.com.au), and available in printed form at the practice.