

PURPOSE

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. This information is displayed in our waiting room, available at reception, and is available on our website.

POLICY

Use of your personal information

Ashburton Family Practice collects and holds personal health information about you. The main reason we collect information from you is so that we may provide you with the best possible healthcare. It enables us to properly assess, diagnose and treat your health care needs. Without this information we may be restricted in our capacity to provide you with the standard of medical care that you expect. All members of the professional team involved in your care will have access to your personal information however only authorised team members will have access to your medical history. 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.

Our practice will not use your personal information for marketing any of our goods or services directly to you without your consent. If you do consent, you may opt-out of direct marketing at any time by notifying our practice in writing.

This means we may use and disclose the information you provide in the following ways:

- Disclosure to others involved in your health care, including doctors and specialists outside this practice who may become involved in treating you, pathology services, radiology services and in emergency situations. This may occur through referral to other doctors or specialists, or for medical tests and in the reports or results returned to us following the referrals, or requested by a third party where your consent has been given
- By law, doctors are sometimes required to disclose information for public interest reasons e.g. mandatory reporting of communicable diseases or through court subpoenas
- To establish, exercise or defend an equitable claim or for the purpose of a confidential dispute resolution process
- During the course of providing medical services, through Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions, on medical registers to improve community health care (for example, Diabetes register, CST register, MyHealthRecord, POLAR)
- Administrative purposes in running our medical practice, including our insurer or medical indemnity provider, and quality assurance and accreditation bodies
- Billing purposes, including providing information to Medicare Australia and other organisations responsible for the financial aspects of your care
- For conducting medical research. You will be informed when such activities are being conducted and your involvement will only take place if you provide express signed consent for each program where identified information is required
- Assisting with training and education of other health professionals. You will be informed when such activities are being conducted and your involvement will only take place if you provide express consent to your medical practitioner for each program
- To assist in locating a missing person

In most cases we will obtain the information directly from you or your treating doctors.

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 information

Our practice participates in quality improvement activities that use de-identified patient information. De-identified information is any information that does not link to you personally. Such information is shared with the following entities:

- Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network - Ongoing
- NPS Medicinewise – MedicinesInsight program - Ongoing
- Other research purposes with NHMRC (National Health and Medical Research Council) approval - Periodically

You can opt-out of our participation in these programs by advising reception staff or contacting the Practice Manager.

What personal information do we collect?

The information we will collect about you includes:

- Names, date of birth, addresses and 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

Our practice will collect your personal information:

- 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
- Information can also be collected through Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions, MyHealthRecord system via the Shared Health Summary and Event summary
- We may 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. This may happen because it is not practical or reasonable to collect it from you directly. This may include information from a third party, your guardian or responsible person, other involved healthcare providers such as specialists, allied health professionals, hospitals, community health services, pathology and radiology services, Medicare or the Department of Veteran's Affairs

Information Quality

Our goal is to ensure that your information is accurate, complete and up-to-date. To assist us with this, please contact us if any of the details you have provided change. Further, if you believe that the information we have about you is not accurate, complete or up-to-date, contact us and we will use all reasonable efforts to correct the information.

Data Security

The storage, use, retention, destruction and, where necessary, the transfer of personal health information will be undertaken in a secure manner that protects patient privacy and complies with the state legislations and laws. We will take all reasonable steps to protect the security of the personal information that we hold by ensuring each team member that has access to our clinical software is provided with a unique log password that grants them

access to information according to their level of authorisation. This includes appropriate measures to protect electronic materials stored and generated in hard copy. It is necessary for medical practices to keep patient information after a patient's last attendance for as long as required by law or is prudent, having regard to administrative requirements. All staff are required to sign confidentiality agreements that protect your privacy and confidentiality. This includes not storing or temporarily leaving your personal health information in an area that is accessible or could be viewed by the general public. Our practice has a business continuity and information recovery plan such as daily server backup's and antivirus software protection to ensure our files are secure in the event of a natural disaster.

Privacy and our website

Your contact information provided when you communicate with us via our website www.ashburtonfamilypractice.com.au or via social media is collected to enable us to respond to you. Our practice offers an online appointment booking service using a third party provider – HealthEngine. All terms and conditions are provided when you choose to use this service.

What happens if you choose not to provide the information?

You are not obliged to provide us your personal information. However, if you choose not to provide us with your personal details such as name, address, date of birth and contact information, we may not be able to provide you with the full range of our services.

Treatment of Children

The rights of children to the privacy of their health information, based on the professional judgement of the doctor and consistent with law, may restrict access to the child's information by parents or guardians.

Complaints

If you have any complaints about our privacy practices or wish to make a complaint about how your personal information is managed, please contact the Practice Manager. All complaints will be dealt with fairly and as quickly as possible. A privacy complaint relates to any concern or dispute that you have with our privacy practices as it relates to your personal information. This could include matters such as how personal information is collected, stored, used, disclosed or how access is provided. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of our handling of your complaint you may contact the Victorian Health Complaints Commissioner on Freecall 1300 582 113, visit the website or the Federal Privacy Commissioner.

Access to Health Records

If you would like access to, or a copy of your information (including health information), please complete the Accessing Personal Health Information form which is available from Reception. To obtain access to your information you will have to provide proof of your identity. This is necessary to ensure that personal information is provided only to correct and authorised individuals. Please note: there are some lawful exclusions to the obligation to provide access including if providing access would pose a serious threat to someone's life or health or if providing access would have an unreasonable impact on the privacy of other individuals.

Costs and charges

There is no fee to lodge a request for access. Ashburton Family Practice may charge a reasonable fee to cover administrative costs. There are limits to the fees we can charge and these are prescribed in the Health Records Act 2002 (Vic). These charges cannot be claimed on Medicare or Health Funds.

Policy Review

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