

Purpose

This pamphlet explains how your personal and health information is recorded and managed at our practice. We also maintain a full written Privacy Policy outlining how we handle personal information. You can request a free copy from reception or access it on our website.

Personal information

The personal information we collect includes your name, date of birth, address, contact details, Medicare number, healthcare identifiers, and health fund details.

We may also collect medical information such as your medical history, medications, allergies, test results, immunisations, family and social history, and any care you may require.

GPs need accurate and up-to-date information about your past and present health in order to provide you with safe, high-quality care.

Our practice follows the RACGP Handbook for the Management of Health Information in General Practice (3rd edition), which incorporates state and federal privacy legislation and the Australian Privacy Principles. These require that your personal information is kept private, confidential, and secure at all times.

Your medical records

This practice takes steps to ensure that your medical records:

- are accurate, complete, well-organised and legible
- are up-to-date
- contain enough information to allow another GP to care for you
- contain a summary of your care
- can be used to remind you, with your permission, to return for follow up, check-ups and reviews.

If you are uncertain why information is being requested, please ask your GP or the practice staff.

If you wish to remain anonymous while accessing healthcare services, please talk to the practice staff.

Providing your information to other GPs

At our practice, all GPs may access your medical record when required to provide safe and continuous care. This ensures that any GP you see has the information needed to treat you effectively. If you have concerns about this, please speak with your GP or our reception staff.

It is also important that other healthcare professionals involved in your care—such as specialists, allied health providers, hospitals, and community health services—receive relevant information from your medical record. This helps them provide you with appropriate treatment. Your GP will inform you when this is necessary.

Providing your information to others

GPs respect your right to decide how your personal information is used or shared. For example, this may be sharing your health information with specialist doctors. Personal information that identifies you will only be sent to other people with your consent, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Gaining your consent is the guiding principle used by this practice in using and sharing your information.

Our practice will not share your personal health information with anyone else or another organisation unless:

- you have consented to this sharing, or
- they are legally obliged to disclose the information, in which case your GP will first discuss with you the information that she or he is legally obliged to disclose, or
- the information is necessary for you to obtain Medicare payments or other health insurance rebates, or
- there is an overriding public health and safety interest in the release of the information.

In the above cases, only information necessary to meet the requirements will be provided. Our practice uses secure document automation technologies and referral templates, which ensure that only the relevant medical information is included in referral letters. Information may also be sent electronically using approved secure messaging systems.

Your health information will not ordinarily be sent overseas unless:

- you are informed and provide consent for this to occur, and
- the overseas country receiving the information has privacy laws that are very similar to the Australian Privacy Principles.

Using health information for quality improvement and research

This practice may use patient health information to assist in improving the quality of care we give to all our patients, by reviewing the treatments used in the practice.

Your information held by the practice may be used in research projects to improve healthcare in the community; however, this information will not include data that can identify you.

The information used for research, including the publication of research results, will not be in a form that would allow you to be identified, unless the research serves an important public interest. In such cases, identifiable medical records can be used for medical research without your consent under guidelines issued by the Australian Government. Before providing such identified information, your GP will discuss with you the information that she or he is obliged to disclose.

Security of information in the practice

We take the security of your personal health information very seriously. All electronic, paper, visual, and audio records are managed in accordance with Australian privacy legislation, the Australian Privacy Principles, and RACGP standards.

Your information is protected through secure clinical software, password-controlled access, encrypted systems, automatic screen locks, secure servers, and locked storage for physical records. These measures ensure your personal information is safeguarded from unauthorised access.

Access to your health information

You may ask practice staff about any aspect of your healthcare, including information contained in your record. You can request access to your medical record and any other information the practice records about you.

If you request access to your medical record, your GP will need to consider if there may be a risk of physical or mental harm to you or any other person that may result from disclosure of your health information. Your GP may need to remove any information that will affect the privacy of other individuals.

Sharing information is important for good communication between you and practice staff. Your GP is able to provide a full explanation of the health summary or medical record you are provided access to.

Depending on what is involved, you may be asked to contribute to the cost of providing the information.

Direct marketing

This practice does not engage in direct marketing.

Resolving concerns regarding the privacy of your health information

If you have any concerns regarding the privacy of your personal health information or the accuracy of the information held by the practice, you should discuss these with practice staff. Inaccurate information can be corrected or your concerns noted in your record. For legal reasons, the original notes will be retained.

Disclaimer

This pamphlet template is intended for use as a guide only, and may not be relevant to particular practices or circumstances. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners used best endeavours to adapt the template to general practice's current and anticipated privacy requirements. Always use your own skill and judgement when implementing any such recommendations or procedures; the use of this template does not of itself guarantee compliance with privacy laws, nor discharge any owed duty. We suggest you seek appropriate advice. Accordingly, the RACGP is not responsible to users for any reliance on this template or any information it contains, and users waive any such claim against the RACGP.

Contacts

If you have questions or a complaint about the privacy of your personal information, please ask to speak to the privacy contact officer at the practice.

Further information on privacy legislation is available from:

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner
1300 363 992
www.oaic.gov.au

Office of the Health Services Commissioner
Victoria – 1300 582 113
<https://hcc.vic.gov.au/>

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Alpha Medical Clinic

Personal Information Privacy and your Doctor

'Your Privacy is our Business'

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We are committed to protecting your personal and health information. This brochure explains how we collect, use, store, and share your information in line with Australian privacy laws and RACGP standards.



**Royal Australian College of General
Practitioners**