

Privacy Policy

01/10/2021 Reviewed 11/03/2024

Purpose of this policy

This policy explains how personal information about you and your health is recorded and managed and also how your personal information is managed in our practice.

Upon request you can receive a copy of our policy free of charge or access it via our website.

What is a patient health record?

A health record (also known as a medical record) is a written account of a person's health history. It includes medications, treatments, tests (pathology and radiology), immunisations, and notes from visits to a health care provider.

Patient Health Record

Your patient health record is kept securely on our practice software as an electronic file.

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 or email our manager directly the email address to use is manager@wangaramedical.com.au

What personal information do we collect?

The personal information we collect includes your name, date of birth, address/es, contact details, email address, ethnicity, Medicare number, Concession card details (if applicable), healthcare identifiers and health fund details. Medical information may include medical history, medication, allergies, adverse events, immunisations, family history, risk factors and any care you may need. General Practitioners need information about your past and present health in order to provide you with high quality care.

Our practice follows the guidelines of the RACGPs handbook for the management of health information in general practice, 5th edition (the handbook). The handbook incorporates federal and state privacy legislation, and the Australian Privacy Principles, which requires your personal information is kept private and secure.

How do we collect your personal information?

Our practice may collect your personal information in several different ways.

When you make an appointment with our practice for the first time 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. We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, online registration forms, send us an email or SMS, telephone us, make an online appointment or communicate with us via social media. Sometimes personal information may also be collected from other sources, this is because it may not be practical or reasonable to collect it from you personally. This may include information from your guardian or responsible person, other involved health care 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.

Providing your information to other General Practitioners

In this practice it is normal for all GPs to have access to your medical records. If you have any concerns about this, please discuss them with your GP or practice staff.

It is important that other people involved in your care, such as medical specialists and other healthcare professionals, are informed of the relevant parts of your medical history so that they can provide the best care for you. Your GP will let you know when this is necessary.

When, Why and with whom do we share your personal information

GPs respect your right to decide how your personal information is shared. For example, this may be sharing your health information with specialist doctors, our practice uses document automation technologies (this for us is templates in our Best Practice software), particularly to ensure only the relevant information is disclosed in referral letters when your GP is referring you on. 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. 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 health 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

Australian privacy legislation applies to all personal health information recorded in electronic and paper records. All records must be kept secure to protect against unauthorised access This practice complies with these requirements to protect your information.

How you can communicate with the practice 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 you can 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 30 days. A fee may apply for retrieval of these records depending on the nature and complexity of the records being requested. 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 to the Practice Manager admin@wangaramedical.com.au

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 you should express your concerns in writing, we will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure. Complaints can be lodged in writing to the Practice Manager at admin@wangaramedical.com.au. If you are unsatisfied with the outcome or wish to discuss your complaint with an external body you can contact as below.

Complaints to the OIC (Office of the Information Commissioner)

Our patients have the right to contact the OIC if they feel the need to complain regarding a breach of the APPs or of a registered APP Code, if they feel they cannot discuss this with the practice in the first instance or if they feel that the communication has broken down.

The details for the OIC are as follows:

Office of the Information Commissioner
Albert Facey House
469 Wellington Street
Perth WA 6000

Phone: 08 6551 7888

Email: info@foi.wa.gov.au

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it reflects the current processes and procedures of Wangara Medical Centre and current legislation requirements. Next review date 1st March 2025