



Prema House Medical Centre SCU

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Privacy Policy

Purpose

This Policy explains how personal information about you and your health is recorded and managed in our practice. We also have a written privacy policy describing how we manage personal information. You can receive a copy of our policy free of charge upon request or access it via our practice website.

Personal information

The 'personal information' we collect includes your name, date of birth, address/es, contact details, Medicare number, healthcare identifiers and health fund details. Medical information may include medical history and any care you may need. GPs need information about your past and present health in order to provide you with high-quality care.

Our practice follows the guidelines of the RACGP's 5th Standards for the management of health information in general practice. These Standards incorporate federal and state privacy legislation, and the Australian Privacy Principles, which requires that your personal information is kept private and secure.

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

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 they can provide the best care for you. Your GP will let you know when this is necessary.

Providing your information to others

We 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 they are 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 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 they are obliged to disclose.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Related Policies:

C6.3 A Privacy Policy - Patient Handout
C1.1 A Practice Information Sheet
C6.3 A-D Confidentiality and privacy of health and other information
C6.3 C Request Medical Records
C6.4 D Computer Security Policies Procedures
C6.4 E Storage Retention and Destruction of Records C6.4F
Electronic Communications Policy

References/Useful Information:

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

Information and Privacy Commission New
South Wales – 1800 472 679
www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/privacy/ipc_index.html

Definitions:

Health Records: Refer to Information collected by the Doctor/Nurse or by the admin team on behalf of the clinical team, with patients consent and stored in our system (Best Practice Local Server) in order to provide best possible care.

Types of information stored:

• Personal and Demographic Information

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Address
- Contact numbers
- Emergency contact details
- Next of kin
- National Health Identifier or patient ID

• Medical History

- Past illnesses and surgeries
- Chronic conditions (e.g., diabetes, asthma)
- Allergies (medication, food, environmental)
- Family medical history

• Immunisations

- Vaccination records
- Dates of immunisations

- Booster schedules
- **Test Results**
 - Blood tests
 - Imaging results (X-rays, MRIs, CT scans)
 - Biopsy and pathology reports
 - Urine/stool test results
- **Consultation Notes**
 - Notes from doctor and specialist visits
 - Assessment findings
 - Diagnoses
 - Treatment plans
- **Clinical Information**
 - Current medications
 - Vital signs (blood pressure, temperature, etc.)
 - Progress notes
 - Nursing and allied health documentation
- **Medications**
 - Prescribed medications
 - Dosages and frequency
 - Medication history
 - Adverse drug reactions
- **Administrative Information**
 - Insurance details
 - Billing and payment records
 - Appointment history
 - Referral letters and reports
- **Mental Health Information**
 - Psychological assessments
 - Counseling or psychiatric notes
 - Behavioral observations
- **Consent and Legal Documentation**
 - Consent forms
 - Advance directives
 - Power of attorney or guardianship info

Anonymous Communication

Patients have the right to communicate with our clinic anonymously or by using a pseudonym, where it is lawful and practicable to do so. While certain services may require identification (such as Medicare billing, medical record access, or continuity of care), we will respect requests for anonymity where possible—for example, when making general enquiries or providing feedback. Please note that limitations may apply if anonymity affects our ability to provide safe, comprehensive medical care or meet legal obligations.

Informed Consent for Sharing Information

We are committed to protecting your privacy and ensuring that any sharing of your personal health information is done with your informed consent, unless required or authorised by law. Before we share your information with other healthcare providers, specialists, or third parties, we will seek your permission and explain the purpose and scope of the disclosure. You have the right to withhold consent or to withdraw it at any time. In situations where your information must be shared to ensure your safety or the safety of others, or to comply with legal obligations, we will do so in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 and relevant health legislation.

Use of Documentation Automation in Referrals

Our clinic may use secure documentation automation tools to streamline the referral process to specialists and other healthcare providers. These systems assist in generating accurate and timely referral letters by automatically compiling relevant clinical information from your medical record. This helps ensure continuity of care and reduces administrative errors. All automated documentation is reviewed by a qualified healthcare provider before being sent. Your personal information is only included in referrals with your consent, and is transmitted securely in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 and applicable healthcare standards.

Access to Patient Health Information

Patients have the right to access their personal health information held by our clinic. Test results and discharge summaries are typically available via **My Health Record**, and patients may also request that consult notes or other relevant medical documents be uploaded to their My Health Record. Additionally, patients can request access to their records directly by completing and signing a **Records Request Form**. A reasonable fee may apply depending on the volume of information requested and the time required to compile it. Patients may also authorise a **third party** to access their records on their behalf, provided we receive signed patient consent. Alternatively, patients can request a **printed copy** of relevant information during a consultation with their doctor.

Responsibilities:

- Practice Manager: To ensure the policy is up to date and effectively communicated.
- Reception Staff: To ensure patient privacy is withheld and stay up to date with relevant privacy procedures and legislation
- Doctors: To ensure patient privacy is withheld and stay up to date with relevant privacy procedures and legislation