



## **Ovens Medical Group**

## **Privacy policy**

Revision date: 9/2022

This policy is based on the template provided by RACGP

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## **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 (eg staff training).

## **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
- health fund details.

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?**

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

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

1. During the course of providing medical services and when registering with our clinic for the first time, we may collect detailed personal information.

Information can also be collected through electronic transfer of prescriptions (eTP) or My Health Record (eg via Shared Health Summary or Event Summaries).

2. We may also collect your personal information when you telephone us.
3. 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?**

We sometimes share your personal information:

- with third parties who work with our practice for business purposes, such as accreditation agencies or information technology providers – these third parties are required to comply with APPs and this policy
- with other healthcare providers
- when it is required or authorised by law (eg 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 (eg some diseases require mandatory notification)
- during the course of providing medical services, through eTP, My Health Record (eg 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.

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

Our practice may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services we offer to our patients through research and analysis of our patient data.

We may provide de-identified data to other organisations to improve population health outcomes. The information is secure, patients cannot be identified and the information is stored within Australia. You can let our reception staff know if you do not want your information included.

## **How do we store and protect your personal information?**

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms.

Paper records, electronic records, audio and or visual recordings

Our practice stores all personal information securely.

## **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 by filling out a request for information form and our practice will respond within 30 days.

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 our practice manager.

## **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 to our practice manager. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure. We will respond to you 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](http://www.oaic.gov.au) or call the OAIC on 1300 363 992.

## **Requests to record consultations**

Recording of consultations must be discussed with the doctor or nurse prior to consultation. Written consent is required from all parties in order to communicate or publish any recorded conversation to a third party.

It is illegal for a patient to share a recording of the consultation without the consent of the Doctor or nurse.

## **Third parties present during consultations**

From time to time patients, nurses or doctors may request to have a third party present during a consultation.

Patients who choose to bring another person to the consultation must agree to allowing the doctor to discuss their personal information. Verbal consent is required and will be documented in the notes with the name of the person present in the consultation. The patient is responsible for informing the Doctor if there is information which they do not want to discuss with the third party present.

From time to time our clinic has General Practice registrars (Qualified Doctors training to become GPs) and Medical or Nursing Students who may request to participate in consultations with our Doctors or Nurses. All observers are covered by professional indemnity insurance and are required to follow the same strict confidentiality agreements as the treating doctor.

If a patient is asked whether they consent they must provide written consent prior to the appointment. Patients are not obliged to have another party as part of the consultation.

## **Doctors and nurses recording clinical images electronically in the patient file.**

Patients are required to provide consent to having any photos taken and this will be recorded in the notes.

All photographs are taken on the clinical camera, a device only used for clinical photographs and is always stored at the clinic with de-identified images. Access to the camera is only for Doctors, nurses and the Medical Receptionist in charge of downloading the photos to the patient file. Details of the patient is recorded separately in the practice software. Administration staff will then match the photo with the entry on the camera and upload the photo.

## **Telehealth**

Consultations will be provided in line with the RACGP guide for video consultations

## **Policy review statement**

This policy is reviewed annually and periodically if there is changes to our systems

or laws. You will be notified of updates to this policy via our website.