

PRIVACY POLICY

Introduction

Wicklow Avenue Medical Centre is committed to protecting the privacy of patient information and to handling personal information in a responsible manner.

This Privacy Policy explains:

- how we collect, store, use and disclose your personal information;
- how you may access your personal information;
- how we protect the quality and security of your personal information;
- how you may seek correction of any personal information we hold; and
- how you may make a complaint about our handling of your personal information.

Our practice manages your personal information in accordance with federal and state law. This includes complying with the Australian Privacy Principles (forming part of the Privacy Act 1998) and the Victorian Health Privacy Principles (forming part of the Health Records Act 2001 Vic).

Consent to collect, store and use your personal information

When you register as a patient of our practice, you provide consent for our general practitioners and practice staff to access and use your personal information so they can provide you with the best possible healthcare. We also use your information for directly related business activities, such as financial claims and payments, practice audits and accreditation. Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms, including electronic health records, imaging and photographs uploaded to your health record.

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.

Collection of personal information

The type of personal information we collect may include:

- name, date of birth, address, contact details, gender (as identified by you), ethnicity
- medical information, including medical history, medications, allergies, adverse events, immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors
- Medicare number
- healthcare identifier numbers
- health fund details
- notes recorded in your electronic health record
- results and reports from other health care providers
- credit card or direct billing information (not stored)
- through electronic transfer of prescriptions
- My Health Record if you have one

Wherever possible we will collect this information from you personally, however we also collect information from other sources, such as treating specialists, allied health, radiology, pathology, hospitals, pharmacy, Medicare, Department of Veterans' Affairs, TAC or WorkCover and other healthcare providers. Information may be collected via mail, facsimile, secure message programs and secure online services. We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us a reply SMS or make an online appointment.

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In emergency situations we may need to collect information from your immediate family, friends or carers. We are required to identify you at every encounter with our practice via a three (3) point identification check. We make every attempt to be discreet when asking you this information to maintain your privacy.

We do not initiate or recommend sharing your personal health information via email. Our email service is not encrypted and is not a secure method to share your personal health information with us or third (3rd) parties.

Use and disclosure

We will treat your personal information as strictly private and confidential. We will only use or disclose it for purposes directly related to your care and treatment, or in ways that you would reasonably expect that we may use it for your ongoing care and treatment.

There are circumstances where we may be permitted or required by law to disclose your personal information to third (3rd) parties. For example, to Medicare, Police, insurers, solicitors, government regulatory bodies, tribunals, courts of law, hospitals, or debt collection agents. We may also from time to time provide statistical data to third parties for research purposes if consent has been obtained prior.

We may disclose information about you with third (3rd) parties how work with our practice for business purposes, such as accreditation agencies, IT service providers, software companies, solicitor or debt collection agent. These services are required to comply with the Australian Privacy Principles and this policy and may only use your personal information for the purposes of performing the services we have engaged them to provide.

We will not transfer your personal information to an overseas recipient unless we have your consent or we are required to do so by law.

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 at any time by notifying our practice.

Access to your personal information

You are entitled to request access to your medical records. We request that you put your request in writing and we will respond to it within thirty (30) days. There may be a fee for the administrative costs of retrieving and providing you with copies of your medical records, in accordance with Health Records Regulations.

We may deny access to your medical records in certain circumstances permitted by law, for example, if disclosure may cause a serious threat to your health or safety, or legal proceedings are apparent. We will always tell you why access is denied and the options you have to respond to our decision.

Corrections

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. If you believe that the information we have about you is not accurate, complete or up-to-date, we ask that you contact us in writing, addressed to our Practice Manager.

Withholding information

You are not obliged to give us your personal information. However, if you choose not to provide our practice with the personal details listed in this policy, it may limit our ability to provide you with a complete health service. We encourage you to discuss any concerns you may have with our reception staff or your doctor.

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Data Quality and Security

We aim to ensure that your personal information is accurate, complete, up to date and relevant. For this purpose, our staff may ask you to confirm that your contact details are correct when you attend a consultation. We request that you let us know if any of the information we hold about you is incorrect or out of date.

Our practice takes all reasonable steps to protect the security of the personal information we hold by:

- securing our premises;
- using passwords and varying access levels on databases to limit access and protect electronic information from unauthorised interference, access, modification and disclosure; and
- storing hard copy records in secure filing cabinets in a secure area, accessible only to practice staff.

Complaints

We take complaints and concerns regarding privacy very seriously. If you have a complaint regarding the manner in which the privacy of your personal information has been handled by our practice, we request that you contact us in writing. Please address your letter to:

Practice Manager
Wicklow Avenue Medical Centre
65-67 Wicklow Avenue,
Croydon VIC 3136

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within fourteen (14) days and endeavour to provide a full response within thirty (30) days of receipt. Should you be dissatisfied with our response, you may lodge a written complaint with the Victorian Privacy Commissioner at <https://www.privacy.com.au> and/or the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner <https://www.oaic.gov.au>

Policy review

This Privacy Policy is current from 6th August, 2018. From time to time we may make changes to our policy, processes and systems in relation to how we handle your personal information. We will update this Privacy Policy to reflect any changes. Those changes will be available on our website and in the practice.