

Privacy Policy

Privacy and Managing Health Information in General Practice

We Provide and Experience that welcomes and values everyone

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

Version 1/Issued 08.09.23/Authorised by: Practice Manager

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 (e.g. staff training).

What personal information do we collect?

The information we will collect about you includes:

- 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.

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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.

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, send us an email or SMS, telephone us, make an online appointment or communicate with us using social media.

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).

Your Medical Records

This Practice takes steps to ensure that your medical records are:

- 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 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.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms such as electronic records visual records (X-rays, CT scans, videos and photos).

Our practice stores all personal information securely in electronic format, in protected information systems or in hard copy format in a secured environment

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When, why and with whom do we share your personal information?

We sometimes share your personal information:

- With other healthcare providers
- 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
- When it is required or authorised by law (e.g. 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 (e.g. some diseases require mandatory notification)
- During the course of providing medical services, through eTP, My Health Record (e.g. via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).
- This practice uses automated technology ensuring that only relevant medication information is included in referrals letters.

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.

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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 an email to FOI@shdh.org.au, you will need to provide ID along with your request.

To request any correspondence from your records, please email medicalcentre@shdh.org.au

You may also request that we correct or update your information, and you should make such requests in writing to our Administration team at medicalcentre@shdh.org.au

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. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure.

Please contact: Ashleigh Graham, Practice Manager

54-56 McCrae St, Swan Hill

Or Via email at agraham@shdh.org.au

Alternatively, you may complete a complaint for located at both reception desks and place in the designated box. This may be completed anonymously if you do not wish to leave your contact details.

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 or call the OAIC on 1300 363 992.

Third Party Consent

If there is third party present in the consultation, consent will be obtained at the reception desk upon check in or in the consultation room before consultation starts.

Third parties can be interpreters, registrars, chaperones/observers, and medical, allied health or nursing students on placement.

This consent is stored in the patients file.

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Policy review statement

Swan Hill Primary Health Medical Centre is committed to protecting your privacy. We are required by law to protect all your Personal and confidential information such as information relating to your health and other personal details. We comply with all Victorian legislation relating to confidentiality and privacy, including, where relevant, the Health Services Act 1988 (Vic), the Health Records Act 2001(Vic) and the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014, and in accordance with guidelines issued by the Health Complaints Commissioner.

What if you don't want your information released?

You have the right to tell us that you do not wish to have any information released about your health status. We will respect your wishes to the extent permitted by law.

Telephone Consults Privacy & Consent

Patient privacy and confidentiality during telephone and video consultations relies upon secure environmental/physical, audio and visual components. To help ensure patient confidentiality and privacy:

If working away from the practice or at home, we ensure the technology being used is fit for clinical purpose.

Telephone and video consultations are not recorded or kept on records, only the practitioner's notes are recorded in the records.

References: RACGP 5th Edition Standards Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 Health Services Act 1988 as amended 2014 and the Health Records Act 2001 as amended 2014 Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)

For any further information relating to our Privacy Policy or your Health Information, please contact:

Ashleigh Graham, Practice Manager

Swan Hill Primary Health Medical Centre

ABN: 24 314 338 210

54-56 McCrae St, Swan Hill VIC 3585

(P) 03 50339900 (F) 03 50339920