

Riverina Family Medicine Privacy Policy

Current as of: 01/12/2020

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. We will ask you to sign the consent page on our new patient information form.

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 authorized 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.

1. When you make your first appointment our practice staff will collect your personal and demographic information via your registration.
2. During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information via My Health Record.
3. 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.
4. 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).
- To insurance companies etc. if we have your specific signed request and consent to do so
- 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.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in electronic format only. Any paper copies of records that are received by us from another party, will be scanned and will form part of your electronic record, the paper copies will be shredded via a security shredding service.

Our practice stores all personal information securely in our clinical software on our server. The server is monitored and password protected by our IT company, and the Practice itself is secured by an alarm system and CCTV cameras. Each individual staff member has an individual log on. Reception staff will not access to your clinical file without your express consent. They will not provide you with documentation from your file without the doctor's consent. All staff have signed and abide by confidentiality agreements.

How can you access and correct your personal information at our practice?

You have the right to request access to your personal information.

Our practice acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. We require you to make an appointment with your doctor (or another doctor at our practice) so that the documents contained in the records may be explained to you. The doctor will then provide you with copies of the documents that you need. This will incur a fee for a standard consultation.

Alternatively, we will transfer your file at your request to another practice. We require a signed file transfer form from you detailing your authority to send the files, and the name and address of the practice to send it to. The form must be signed by each person over the age of 16 years, and by a parent or guardian for a child under 16 years. Your records will be saved to a password protected file and sent by registered mail to your new practice. The cost for this process is \$35.

If the need to access to your file is arising from a court related matter, all requests to release information must be received by the practice from your solicitor, including your signed authority to release same, or by subpoena of the court.

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 on your medical record, and you should make such requests in writing to the 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. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure.

Please address all complaints to:

The Practice Manager
Riverina Family Medicine
PO Box 5164, Wagga Wagga 2650
Or email: lisa.harvey@rfmedicine.com.au
Telephone: 02 69 362 088

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.

Privacy and our website

Whilst we do have a practice website and do use social media, these formats are only for the use of providing information. We do not collect patient information through these platforms.

Policy review statement

This policy will be reviewed and amended annually. It is available to all of our patients via our website, or upon request at the reception desk.