Riverina Family Medicine privacy policy

Introduction

The objective of this document is to provide you, our patient, with clear information on how your personal information is collected and used within the practice. Occasionally we also need to share your personal information to involve others in your healthcare and this policy outlines when, how, and why we share your information.

Who can I contact about this policy?

For enquiries concerning this policy, you can contact the Practice Manager, or speak with your doctor.

Why and when your consent is necessary

When you register as a patient of RFM, you provide consent for the GPs and practice staff to access and use your personal information to facilitate the delivery of healthcare. Access to your personal information is restricted to practice team members who require it for your care. If we ever use your personal information for purposes other than outlined in this document, we will obtain additional consent from you.

It is important to us that as our patient, you understand why we collect and use your personal information.

By acknowledging this Privacy Policy you consent to us collecting, holding, using, retaining and disclosing your personal information in the manners described below.

Why do we collect, use, hold and share your personal information?

The practice collects, uses, stores, and shares your personal information primarily to manage your health safely and effectively. This includes providing healthcare services, managing medical records, and ensuring accurate billing and payments. Additionally, we may utilise your information for internal quality and safety improvement processes such as practice audits, accreditation purposes, and staff training to maintain high-quality service standards.

What personal information do we collect?

The information collected about you includes your:

- names, date of birth, addresses, contact details
- medical information including medical history, medicines, allergies, and adverse reactions immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors
- Medicare number (where available) for identification and claiming purposes
- healthcare identifier numbers
- health fund details.

Dealing with us anonymously

You have the right to deal with your doctor 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 is your personal information collected?

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

When you make your first appointment, the practice team will collect your personal and demographic information via your registration.

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.

1. In some circumstances, personal information may also be collected from other sources, including:

- 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 (if relevant).
- While providing medical services, further personal information may be collected via:
    - electronic prescribing
    - My Health Record
    - online appointments.

Various types of images may be collected and used, including:

- **CCTV footage:** Collected from our premises for security and safety purpose
- **Photos and medical images:** These can be taken using personal devices for medical purposes, following the guidelines outlined in our guide on using personal devices for medical images.

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

We sometimes share your personal information:

- with third parties 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 (e.g. In referral letters)
- 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 it is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (e.g. some diseases require mandatory notification)
- When it is provision of medical services, through electronic prescribing, My Health Record (e.g. via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).

Only people who need to access your personal information will be able to do so. Other than providing medical services or as otherwise described in this policy, the practice will not share personal information with any third party without your consent.

We do not share your personal information with anyone outside Australia (unless under exceptional circumstances that are permitted by law) without your consent.

Will your information be used for marketing purposes?

The practice will not use your personal information for marketing any 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 the practice in writing.

How is your information used to improve services?

The practice may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services offered to patients through research, analysis of patient data for quality improvement and for training activities with the practice team

We may provide de-identified data to other organisations to improve population health outcomes. If we provide this information to other organisations patients cannot be identified from the information we share,

the information is secure and is stored within Australia. You can let reception staff know if you do not want your de-identified information included.

At times, general practices are approached by research teams to recruit eligible patients into specific studies which require access to identifiable information. You may be approached by a member of our practice team to participate in research. Researchers will not approach you directly without your express consent having been provided to the practice. If you provide consent, you would then receive specific information on the research project and how your personal health information will be used, at which point you can decide to participate or not participate in the research project.

How are document automation technologies used?

Document automation is where systems use existing data to generate electronic documents relating to medical conditions and healthcare.

The practice uses document automation technologies to create documents such as referrals, which are sent to other healthcare providers. These documents contain only your relevant medical information.

These document automation technologies are used through secure medical software Best Practice.

All users of the medical software have their own unique user credentials and password and can only access information that is relevant to their role in the practice team.

The practice complies with the Australian privacy legislation and APPs to protect your information.

All data, both electronic and paper are stored and managed in accordance with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Privacy and managing health information guidance.

How are Artificial Intelligence (AI) Scribes used?

The practice uses an AI scribe tool to support GPs take notes during their consultations with you. The AI scribe uses an audio recording of your consultation to generate a clinical note for your health record. The practice AI scribe service is Heidi.

Heidi:

- does not share information outside of Australia
- destroys the audio file once the transcription is complete.
- removes sensitive, personal identifying information as part of the transcription

The practice will only use data from our digital scribe service to provide healthcare to you.

How is your personal information stored and protected?

Your personal information will 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.

We use templates within our Clinical Software to insert all clinical data and information into our referrals and letters to send on your behalf. This ensures that only relevant data is included and sent on your behalf.

The practice stores all personal information securely.

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 your doctor's consent. All staff have signed and abide by confidentiality agreements.

CCTV footage is stored on our server for approximately 30 days prior to deletion. The cameras record the exterior of our building, including the carpark and entrances, our reception area and entry area, and the internal corridor to our rear entrance. The cameras do not record in the consulting rooms, the bathrooms, or the communal areas at the rear of the Practice.

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.

The practice will respond to any requests to access or correct your personal information within 7 – 10 business days.

The practice will take reasonable steps to correct your personal information where the information is not accurate or up to date. Sometimes, we will ask you to verify your personal information held by the practice is correct and current. You may request we correct or update your information. To do this please contact the Practice Manager in writing via reception@rfmedicine.com.au; or PO Box 5164 Wagga Wagga; or deliver in person to the Practice.

Our practice acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. We require you to put this request in writing to your doctor and our practice will respond within 7 – 10 business days. For provision of your records, we may charge a $30 administration fee.

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

If you do not feel we have resolved your issue You may also contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner. The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner will require you to give them time to respond before they investigate. For further information visit **www.oaic.gov.au** or call the OAIC (Office of the Australian Information Commissioner) on 1300 363 992.

How is privacy on the website maintained?

At RFM, any personal information you share with us through website, email, and social media, is handled securely and confidentially. This practice website does not use analytics. Any details you submit through our contact form are only used to respond to your enquiry. The website uses functionality cookies for Google reCAPTCHA, which protects the site against spam.

Policy review statement

Our privacy policy is regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with current obligations.

If any changes are made:

- They will be reflected on the website.
- Significant changes may be communicated directly to patients via email or other means.

Please check the policy periodically for updates. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us.