

LEICHHARDT HOUSE privacy policy

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.

Definition of Health Record

A health record is information held about a patient, in paper or electronic form, which may include contact and demographic information, medical history, notes on treatment, observations, correspondence, investigations, test results, photographs, prescription records, medication charts, insurance information, legal information and reports, or work health and safety reports.

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 and ethnicity, 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. This may prevent us though from providing normal medical services to you and may also prevent you from being able to access Medicare. Feel free to discuss this with your doctor.

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 either directly from you or from other sources such as an ehealth record.
3. We may also collect your personal information telephone us, or make an online appointment.
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, for example with other providers to whom you are referred. Normally a summary of your medical history will be inserted automatically into computerised referral letters. Please discuss with your doctor if you do not wish this to happen.
- 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 (electronic transfer of prescriptions), 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.

If we refer you to other providers we will send a referral letter, with your consent, that contains your demographic information, and clinical information relevant to the referral. These referrals may be sent by secure email or by fax or post. You may request a copy of your referral.

Our practice system uses document automation technologies to generate electronic documents such as referrals by autofilling information from the practice information system. Only relevant information is included. These technologies are used through secure medical software 'BestPractice'.

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.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms. Medical records are principally kept as computerised electronic records. We also store paper based records that date from prior to the time our practice computerised. We may also store more recent paper records if they are impractical to convert to a computerised format.

Our practice stores all personal information securely. Staff who access to files have signed confidentiality agreements.

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 and our practice will respond within a reasonable time, generally within 30 days. Usually we do not charge a fee for access, unless significant costs are incurred in providing access.

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 the practice or discuss updating your record when you see your doctor.

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 any concerns to Leichhardt House, 3 Leichhardt Street, Toowoomba 4350, or telephone us on 0746353788 and ask to speak to your doctor about a privacy concern.

We will seek to resolve the issue 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 or call the OAIC on 1300 363 992.

Policy review statement

This policy is reviewed every 3 years. The next review will occur around the 14th of April, 2028