



# PRIVACY POLICY

## Westside Medical Centre

### 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 GP's 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 another purpose, we will seek additional specific consent from you before we do so.

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

Our practice will need to collect your personal information to provide health care 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 that we collect about you includes your:

- Names, date of birth, addresses and 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;
- DVA and pension numbers; and
- Healthcare identifiers;

### Dealing with us anonymously

You have the right to provide feedback anonymously, however, to provide the best clinical care possible, we do require proof of identity. Additionally, Medicare benefits are unable to be claimed anonymously.

### How do we collect your personal information?

Our practice will collect your personal information:

1. When you make your first appointment our practice staff will collect your personal and demographic information via your new patient registration;
2. During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information. Information can also be collected through the My Health Record system and electronic prescription transfer (eRx);
3. We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email, telephone us, contact us through social medias or make an online appointment; and
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, pathology and diagnostic imaging services; and
  - Medicare or DVA (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 the Australia Privacy Policy and this Privacy 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 the location of 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); and
- During the course of providing medical services, through eTP, My Health Record (eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary), referrals (electronic and paper).

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 various forms such as electronic records, paper records and visual records such as x-rays, CT scans, videos and photos.

Our practice stores all personal information securely. All computers are protected with passwords and all staff and contractors have signed confidentiality agreements. In addition, our servers are stored in a secure location and we have rigorous IT systems in place to ensure the security of our computer system.

## **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 in writing addressed to the Practice Manager and our practice will respond to you in within 30 days. Though you will not be charged for requesting access to your personal information, charges may apply for the provision of your records.

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 by completing a form available from reception.

## **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 have in writing to: *Practice Manager 11 Highfields Circuit, Port Macquarie, NSW, 2444* or by phoning (02) 6581 3007 and asking to speak to the Practice Manager. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure. We will endeavour to have a response back to you within 30 days.

You may also contact the *Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (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](http://www.oaic.gov.au) or call the OAIC on 1300 363 992.

## **Privacy and our website**

Westside Medical Centre's website contains links to other sites. Please be aware that Westside Medical Centre is not responsible for the privacy practices of the linked sites. We encourage users who use the links on our website to read the privacy statements on each and every linked website that they choose to visit. All links to external sites are neither approved nor endorsed by Westside Medical Centre, and Westside Medical Centre is not responsible for information, products or advertisements.

Your privacy is important to us and we want you to feel comfortable visiting our website. Any personal information that patients give us, including email addresses, will be used only in the following ways:

- Personal data given to us will be securely stored;
- We will not provide your personal data to any third party without your permission;
- We do not automatically collect your personal email address simply because you visit our website; and
- If we join with a third party to provide services and you sign up for those services, we will share only the information necessary for our partner to provide the services to you.

## **Policy review statement**

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is in accordance with any changes that may occur. Westside Medical Centre retains the right to change this Privacy Policy as necessary. If there are any updates to the Westside Medical Centre's Privacy Policy, we will address the changes promptly and update the revision date of this document.

Reviewed: 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020