

Trail Street Medical Centre Privacy Policy

Current as of: January 2024

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 a patient health record

A Patient Health Record is a collection of information about your health.

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, family history and risk factors.
- Medicare number (where available) for identification and claiming purposes.
- healthcare identifiers

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.

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 providing medical services, we may collect further personal information.
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 providing medical services, through eTP, My Health Record (eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary)
- Insurance companies etc. with a specific signed request and consent to do so.
- Deidentified data (meaning NO personally identifiable information, such as first and last name and contact details) may be shared by our practice with other local health initiatives to assist us to provide better health outcomes.

Only people who need to access your information will be able to do so. Other than while 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.

Document automation technologies within the practice management software which are accessed from individual patient files including templates and contacts ensure only relevant medical information is included in referral letters.

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. Paper copies of records that are received by our practice will be scanned to 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 practice management software on our server. The server is monitored, and password protected by our IT company. The practice is secured by an alarm system with individual staff codes. Reception will not access your file without your consent and will not provide any 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, and correction of, your personal information. You will be required to make an appointment with your doctor so that documents contained in the records may be explained to you. You will then be provided with copies of the requested documents. A consultation fee will be incurred.

Alternatively, we will complete a file transfer to another practice on receipt of a signed file transfer form with authority from you. The record will be forwarded on disc via registered mail or alternatively saved to a password protected file. There will be a \$35.00 fee associated with this process.

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

The practice regularly updates your personal information, and you will be asked from time to time to verify that your personal information held by the practice is accurate and up to date. The practice will take steps to correct your personal information where the information is inaccurate or requires updating.

You may also request that the practice correct or update your information verbally or in writing.

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.

All complaints should be addressed to:

The Practice Manager

Trail Street Medical Centre

PO Box 891

Wagga Wagga NSW 2650

Email: practicemanager@trailstreetmc.com.au

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 and amended annually and is available on our website or upon request at the practice.