

Practice Privacy Policy



At Figtree Surgery, we are committed to protecting the privacy of patient information and handling patient's personal information in a responsible manner in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988, the Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012, the Australian Privacy Principles and relevant State and Territory privacy legislation (referred to as the privacy legislation).

This Privacy Policy explains how we collect, use and disclose patient's personal information, how they can access that information and how they can seek the correction of that information.

From time to time, we may make changes to our policy, processes and systems in relation to how we handle patient's personal information. We will update this Privacy Policy to reflect any changes. Our policy and any changes to our policy will be available on our website, in the practice and upon request.

Purpose

To ensure patients who receive care from the Practice are comfortable in entrusting their health information to the Practice.

This policy provides information to patients as to how their personal information (which includes their health information) is collected and used within the Practice, and the circumstances in which we may disclose it to third parties.

Practice procedure

The Practice will:

- provide a copy of this policy upon request
- ensure staff comply with the Australian Privacy Principles (APP) and appropriately deal with inquiries or concerns
- take reasonable steps in the circumstances to implement practices, procedures and systems to ensure compliance with the APP and deal with inquiries or complaints
- collect personal information for the primary purpose of managing a patient's healthcare, for financial claims and payments.

Staff responsibility

The Practice's staff will take reasonable steps to ensure patients understand:

- what information has been and is being collected
- why the information is being collected, and whether this is due to a legal requirement



- how the information will be used or disclosed
- why and when their consent is necessary
- the Practice's procedures for access and correction of information, and responding to complaints of information breaches

Patient consent

The Practice will only interpret and apply a patient's consent for the primary purpose for which it was provided. The Practice staff must seek additional consent from the patient if the personal information collected may be used for any other purpose.

Collection of Information

The Practice will need to collect personal information as a provision of clinical services to a patient at the practice. Collected personal information will include, but not limited to, patient's:

- names, date of birth, gender, ethnicity, addresses and contact details
- Medicare number and / or Private Health insurance detail (where available) (for identification and claiming purposes)
- healthcare identifiers
- medical information including medical history, medications, allergies, adverse events immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors.
- credit card and direct debit details for payment purposes. *(This information will be handled in accordance with PCI Compliance.)*

A patient's personal information may be held at the Practice in various forms, such as:

- paper records
- electronic records
- visual – x-rays, CT scans, videos and photos
- audio recordings

The Practice's procedure for collecting personal information is set out below:

- Collect patient's personal and demographic information via registration when patients present to the Practice for the first time. Patients are encouraged to pay attention to the collection statement attached to/within the form, and information about the management of collected information and patient privacy.



- During the course of providing medical services, the Practice will consequently further collect personal information.
- Personal information may also be collected from the patient's guardian or responsible person (where practicable and necessary), or from any other involved healthcare specialists such as, but not limited to, treating specialists, radiologists, pathologists, hospitals and other health care providers

We collect information in various ways, such as over the phone or in writing, in person in our clinic or over the internet if patient transact with us online. This information is collected by medical and non-medical staff.

In emergency situations, we may also need to collect information from patient's relatives or friends.

The Practice holds all personal information securely, whether in electronic format, in protected information systems or in hard copy format in a secured environment.

We retain medical records for certain periods of time, as required by law, depending on patient's age at the time of services provided.

Use and Disclosure

Personal information will only be used for the purpose of providing medical services and for claims and payments, unless otherwise consented to. Some disclosure may occur to third parties engaged by or for the Practice for business purposes, such as accreditation or for the provision of information technology. These third parties are required to comply with this policy. The Practice will inform the patient where there is a statutory requirement to disclose certain personal information (for example, some diseases require mandatory notification).

We will treat patient's personal information as strictly private and confidential. We will only use or disclose it for purposes directly related to their care and treatment, or in ways that patient would reasonably expect that we may use it for their ongoing care and treatment. For example, the disclosure of blood test results to their specialist or requests for radiology reports.

Our practice uses referral templates that extract your personal information into referral letters through document automation technologies; particularly so that only the relevant medical information is included in referral letters. In addition, we may electronically send your information to service providers via accepted secure messaging systems

The Practice will not disclose personal information to any third party other than in the course of providing medical services, without full disclosure to the patient or the recipient, the reason for the information transfer and full consent from the patient.

Exceptions to disclose without patient consent are where, the information is:

- required by law





- 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 a confidential dispute resolution process.

The Practice will not use any personal information in relation to direct marketing to a patient without that patient's express consent. Patients may opt-out of direct marketing at any time by notifying the Practice in a letter or email.

The Practice evaluates all unsolicited information it receives to decide if it should be kept, acted on or destroyed.

We may also from time to time provide statistical data to third parties for research purposes; in this case we will notify each patient to obtain their consent. Patients may choose to not participate.

For quality assurance and improvement purposes, collective de-identified data will be released to third parties. For example, the number of diabetes patients we are treating at the practice, will be release to Department of Health.

We disclose information about patients to outside contractors to carry out activities on our behalf, such as an IT service provider or solicitor. We impose security and confidentiality requirements on how they handle patients' personal information. Outside contractors are required to not use the information about patients for any purpose except for those activities that we have asked them to perform.

Data Quality and Security

The Practice will take reasonable steps to correct personal information where it is satisfied, not accurate or not up to date. From time to time, the Practice will ask patients to verify the personal information held by the Practice to confirm that it is correct and up to date.

Correction

We request that our patients let us know if any information we hold is incorrect, not complete or out of date. It is patient's responsibility to inform us to update their personal details in their medical record.

In order for us to update the information, we ask that patient contact us in writing, or visit us personally at our clinic.

We do not accept liability due to incorrect information in the patient's record, leading to an unexpected outcome.



Access

The Practice acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. Patients are encouraged to make this request in writing, and the Practice will respond within a reasonable time.

A fee for the administrative costs will be charged for retrieving and providing patient with copies of their medical records.

We may deny access to a patient's medical records in certain circumstances as permitted by law, for example, if disclosure may cause a serious threat to patient health or safety. We will always tell the patient why access is denied and the options the patient has to respond to our decision.

Overseas Transfer of Data

We will not transfer patient's personal information to an overseas recipient unless, we have the patient's consent or we are required to do so by law.

Website Privacy Policy

This website privacy policy applies to the website www.figtreesurgery.com.au

This website policy informs patient in regards to how we collect their information and how we use it.

At Figtree Surgery we respect and understand the importance of patient privacy. We take reasonable measures to protect patient personal information which, the patient provided to us voluntarily on this website, by using encryption technology. However, we cannot guarantee the security of any data patient reveal online.

This website does not use "Website Cookies" while the user is browsing our website, but other websites which are linked to this website may do so. Figtree Surgery is not responsible for the data policies, procedures and contents of other websites. When patients have followed a link to another website, patient have left our website; thus, the privacy policy of that new website applies.

On this website, we collect information such as the patient's email address and contact details, when they chose to contact us via email. Patient's full name, date of birth, Patient Number (if known), mobile phone and email address is collected for online bookings. For online registration for new patients, in addition to the personal information just mentioned, we also collect their current address, contact numbers, gender, ethnicity, emergency contact details, Medicare/concession card, private insurance details (if available) and medical information. We will only use or disclose the information the patient provided us for the purposes directly related to their appointment bookings, registration, care, treatment, and in ways that they would reasonably expect that we use to provide our services to them.



We reserve the right to use or disclose any information as required by law, regulation or legal request, to cooperate with any law enforcement or to lessen the threat to a person's or public's health or safety. We also reserve the right to update and change our practice policy, website privacy policy and methods of handling information at any time. The updates or changes will be available for viewing in our practice, on our website and upon request.

Communication to practice

Patients can communicate with the practice via following methods

- In writing via post
- In writing via our patient suggestion box
- Over the phone
- In writing via fax
- Visit the practice in person

Patients can communicate with the practice anonymously via the first three methods.

Complaints

The Practice takes complaints and concerns about the privacy of patients' personal information seriously.

If a patient has a complaint about the privacy of their personal information, we request that patient to contact us in writing. Upon receipt of the complaint, we will consider the details and attempt to resolve it in accordance with our complaints handling procedures.

If patients are dissatisfied with our handling of a complaint or the outcome, they may make an application to the Australian Information Commissioner or the Privacy Commissioner in their State or Territory.

Contact

For queries regarding our Privacy Policy please contact our Practice Manager on (02) 4225 7822

For access to medical records please contact our Reception on (02) 4225 7822

For more information in regards to Privacy Acts please visit the Office of the National Privacy Commissioner – www.oaic.gov.au

