

Privacy Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this privacy policy is to provide information to you, our patient, on how your personal information and health information is collected and used within our practice, and the circumstances in which we may share it with a third party.

What is a patient health record?

A patient health record is a compilation of a patient's demographic and medical data to create confidential personal file. These records contain information and correspondence relating to an individual's health history, including but limited to all past and present medical conditions, immunisation history, past and present medications, identified allergies and their adverse reactions and observations. Specific events that affect the individual's current care are emphasised. All information documented in the patient health record is collated by the individual and all healthcare professionals providing care and is used for continuity of care.

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 in a way that ensures you receive 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 (e.g. telehealth audio/visual recordings, third-party present during consultation (GP training purposes)).

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, sharing and updating 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 (e.g., staff training).

What personal information do we collect?

The information we will collect about you includes your:

- Full name, date of birth, postal and residential 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
- Healthfund 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.

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 by means of your registration.
2. During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information via electronic transfers of prescriptions (eTP), MyHealth Record information such as Shared Health Summaries and / or Event Summaries.
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 service
- your Health fund, Medicare, or the Department of Veterans' Affairs (as required).

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 Australian Privacy Principles and this policy.
- with other healthcare providers involved in your care.
- 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 there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (e.g., some diseases require mandatory notification)
- during the course of providing medical services, through eTP, MyHealth Record (e.g., uploading 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 disclose any personal or health 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 expressed consent. If you do consent, you may opt out of direct marketing at any time by notifying our practice in writing.

Our practice may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services we offer to our patients through research and analysis of our patient data.

We may provide de-identified data to other organisations to improve population health outcomes. The information is secure, patients cannot be identified and the information is stored within Australia. You can let our reception staff know if you do not want your information included.

Our practice uses document automation technology to ensure that only relevant information is included in shared correspondence, such as referral letters. This is done by using specific templates in our clinical software, which are amended by the treating doctor prior to being sent. Each referral will include demographic information for identification purposes such as, full name, date of birth, address and contact number as well as relevant medical information as determined by the treating health professional.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms primarily as electronic records but can also be as paper records, visual records and audio recordings.

Our practice stores all personal information securely. All records stored in electronic format are secured in protected information systems and can only be accessed by authorised and designated personnel. Hard copy records are stored in a secure area and in secured cabinets.

How can you access and correct your personal information at our practice?

You have the right to request access and correct your personal information.

Our practice acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. We require you to put this request in writing. You may obtain a *Request for Personal Information Form* from reception and our practice will respond within 30 days.

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 an Update of Details Form, obtainable from reception or sending an email request to info@vitamedical.au

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. You can obtain a Complaint/Feedback Form from reception or email info@vitamedical.au. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure.

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.

Privacy and our website

Our website records visits for analytical purposes and no personally identifiable information are retained by www.vitamedical.au. Our online booking provider HotDoc retains information for the purposes of providing healthcare appointments and adheres to the Australian Privacy Principles.

Our privacy policy is available to patients at all times. A copy of this policy is kept at the practice reception and is readily available should a patient request to read it. It is also conveniently located on our website.

Policy Review Statement

This Privacy policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur. Our Practice will inform you via our Website, and at our Practice, if there are any changes to this Policy.