

BALWYN DOCTORS

POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL

Privacy Policy

Current as of: May 2018

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 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/Withholding personal information

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.

You are not obliged to give us your personal information. However, if you choose not to provide the Practice with the personal details requested, it may limit our ability to provide you with full service. We encourage you to discuss your concerns with our reception staff prior to your first consultation or 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 form and/or other forms and questionnaires.
2. During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information. This can include electronic transfer through My Health Record with your consent you can opt out of this service
3. We may also collect your personal information when you telephone us or make an online appointment depending on the information.
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 the course of providing medical services, through My Health Record with your consent you can opt out of this service.

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.

- Electronic records (Pracsoft & Medical Director)
- Hard copies (X-rays, 24HR Blood Monitor Charts and other medical information that can't be sent electronically).

Our practice stores all personal information securely:

- Securing our premises by locking up rooms.
- Having an updated security system
- Using passwords on all electronic systems and databases and varying access levels to protect electronic information from unauthorised interference, access, modification or disclosure.
- The physical practice layout is designed so no member of the public can view your records and information.
- Password protected screen savers are activated after 2 minutes of no activity.
- Storing hard copy records in a secure filing cabinets and/or rooms that are accessible only to practice staff.
- Use a shredder to dispose of paper copies.
- Run secure daily backups.

- Update to date anti-virus to protect the computers and software.

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 (within 30 business days) A fee for the retrieval and copying of your medical record will apply, charged in accordance with the schedule of fees specified in the *Health Records Regulations 2008* (Vic), plus GST. This may not include postage. This fee is not redeemable through Medicare.

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 manager in person or via email.

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 or you may have in writing and address it to the practice manager. We will send an acknowledgment receipt of your complaint within 14 business days and endeavor to provide a full response within 30 days of the receipt. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure.

Our contact details are as follows:

The Practice Manager

Balwyn Doctors

311 Belmore Rd

Balwyn North 3104

Should you be dissatisfied with our response, 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. you also may lodge your written complaint with the Victoria Privacy Commissioner at <https://www.privacy.vic.gov.au> and/or the Victoria Health Services Commissioner at <http://www.health.vic.gov.au>.

Privacy and our website

We do not collect any personal information via our website nor interact with patients about any private medical information via social media and email (unless requested). We currently do not use any social media platforms.

Patients are informed that emails may not be secure and some information cannot be sent digitally and only collected in person.

Policy review statement

This policy is to be reviewed every year depending on the general changes of the clinic. When the review has been completed we will display a notice in the waiting and consultation rooms and upload a copy onto our practice website. The IT security is overseen by the doctor's and practice manager on a daily basis to make sure the integrity of our security is intact.

Disclaimer

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