



**5WSS**  
Family Medical Practice

## Five White Street Surgery Privacy Policy

Current as of: 21 July, 2023

### 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
- Pension and/or DVA card 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 via our registration form.
2. During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information. This practice participates in the MyHealth Record system via a Shared Health Summary. This practice participates in the

MyHealth Record system via a Shared Health Summary. Information is also collected through electronic transfer of prescriptions (eTP).

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
- 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 and through the MyHealth Record/PCEHR system (eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary). This is done in accordance with MyHealth Record legislation and your consent. You are able to opt out of MHR at any time, or ask that certain information not be shared to MHR. You are also able to control access to your MHR via your MyGov login and review access information regarding your MHR.

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 is stored at our practice in various forms. Our practice has systems in place to protect the privacy, security, quality and integrity of the personal health information held electronically. Appropriate staff members are trained in computer security policies and procedures.

### **Correspondence:**

Electronic information is transmitted over the public network in an encrypted format using secure messaging software. Where medical information is sent by post the use of secure postage or a courier service is determined on a case by case basis. Incoming patient correspondence and diagnostic results are opened by a designated staff member. Items for collection or postage are left in a secure area not in view of the public.

### **Facsimile:**

Facsimile, printers and other electronic communication devices in the practice are located in areas that are only accessible to the general practitioners and other authorised staff. Faxing is point to point and will therefore usually only be transmitted to one location. All faxes containing confidential information are sent to fax numbers after ensuring the recipient is the designated receiver. Faxes received are managed according to incoming correspondence protocols. The practice uses a fax disclaimer notice on outgoing faxes that affiliates with the practice.

#### **Emails:**

Emails are sent via various modes and are at risk of being intercepted.

Private medical information will only be transmitted from us over regular email in the message body or by attachment without extra protection with your informed consent. There are no inherent privacy protections in regular email.

#### **Patient Consultations:**

Patient privacy and security of information is maximised during consultations by closing consulting room doors. All Examination couches, including those in the treatment room, have curtains or privacy screens. When, consulting, treatment room or administration office doors are closed. Prior to entering, staff will either knock and wait for a response or alternatively contact the relevant person by internal phone or email. The locks on individual rooms are not engaged except when the room is not in use. It is the doctor's/health care professional's responsibility to ensure that prescription paper, sample medications, medical records and related personal patient information is kept secure, if they leave the room during a consultation or whenever they are not in attendance in the consulting/treatment room.

#### **Medical Records:**

Our patient health records are both paper and electronic. The physical medical records and related information created and maintained for the continuing management of each patient are the property of this Practice. This information is deemed a personal health record and while the patient does not have ownership of the record, he/she has the right to access under the provisions of the Commonwealth Privacy and State Health Records Acts. Requests for access to the medical record will be acted upon only if received in written format.

Our patient health records can be accessed by an appropriate team member when required. Only clinical staff and management have access to patient health records. Both active and inactive patient health records are kept and stored securely. Appropriate staff members are trained in computer security policies and procedures.

## 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. Medical records are able to be transferred to and from Five White Street Surgery. However, in order to comply with the Privacy Act, patients are required to sign a release form. It would be helpful if the doctor, to whom the records are going, stipulates which information is required to reduce the amount of unnecessary copying. There is a \$30.00 charge for searching, printing and or copying of records that we send to another medical practice. A set rate of \$50 applies when 2 or more records are being requested for the same family. We require 7 days processing time from the date of payment.

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 your personal information held by our practice is correct and up-to-date. You may also request that we correct or update your information, and you should make such requests in writing to the Practice Manager (contact details below).

## 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. Your concern will be taken seriously, as we are always looking for ways to improve the efficiency of the practice.

If you have questions or a complaint about the privacy of your personal information, please ask to speak to the privacy contact officer at the practice:

Ms Katherine Lara  
Practice Manager  
Five White Street Surgery  
5 White Street  
Jannali NSW 2226  
Ph: 02 9528 5266

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](http://www.oaic.gov.au) or call the OAIC on 1300 363 992

## Privacy and our website

Our commitment to protecting your privacy includes the use of our website. Our website collects no personally identifiable information. It does however make use of cookies stored by your browser for the purposes of maintaining site preferences and generating site usage statistics.

While we do not collect personal information via our website, when you follow a link to our online appointment booking provider, you must provide some personal information to secure your booking. This information is passed via encrypted electronic communication to our appointment software.

Our online booking provider's privacy policy can be found at: <https://www.hotdoc.com.au/practices/privacy-policy/>

## Policy review statement

This privacy policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur. Five White Street Surgery will notify our patients via the notice board in the waiting room when we amend this policy.