

# Service Street Medical Centre Privacy Policy

Current as of: 28/03/2021

## 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 (for example, staff training). Examples of administrative uses of your information include:

1. Billing purposes, including compliance with Medicare and Health Insurance Commission requirements.
2. Disclosure to others involved in your healthcare including treating doctors and specialists outside this medical practice. This may occur through referral to other doctors, or for medical tests and in the reports or results returned to us following referrals.
3. Disclosure to other doctors in the practice, locums etc. attached to the practice for the purpose of patient care and teaching.
4. For research and quality assurance activities to improve individual and community health care and practice management. Usually information that does not identify you is used but should information that will identify you be required you will be informed and given the opportunity to "opt out" of any involvement.
5. To comply with any legislative or regulatory requirements e.g. notifiable diseases.
6. For reminder letters which may be sent to you regarding your health care and management.

## What personal information do we collect?

The information we will collect about you includes your:

<b>Personal Details</b>	Name	Date of Birth	Address	Contact Details
<b>Medical Information</b>	Medical History	Allergies	Medications	Adverse events
	Social History	Family History	Risk Factors	Immunisations
<b>Other:</b>	Medicare number (where available) for identification and claiming purposes			
	Healthcare identifiers and health fund details (if applicable)			

## 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 the course of providing medical services, we may collect or upload further personal information on My Health Record through the use of a Shared Health Summary or Event Summary.
3. Our practice offers ePrescriptions via SMS or email, and your information can be digitally transmitted to you for the purpose of providing you with a medical prescription.
4. We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email or SMS, telephone us, or make an online appointment.
5. 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 Australian privacy principles 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, notifiable diseases)
- during the course of providing medical services, such as your My Health Record (eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).
- With the third-party online booking platform "Health Engine" for the purposes of allowing you to book your appointments online and to confirm your appointment day and time
- with the third-party "Better Consult" consultation note software for the purpose of sending you a message confirming your appointment and allowing you to pre-notify your doctor of the reasons you are seeing them.

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. We are a fully digital practice and there are no paper copies of your health information. Staff compile information either from directly within your file, or digitally import hard copy documents that have been signed by yourself or practice staff (GP's or nurses) for filing. We do not store visual records of medical imaging (such as X-rays or CT scans), the imaging report is located in your file. Your verbal consent will be obtained if we secure photographic images to store on your file (such as your facial photo to add to your file, or images of a skin wound to assess progression of wound healing).

Our practice stores all personal information securely in electronic format. We use protected information systems that regularly (monthly) back-up the clinics medical software. Our practice holds a license for medical software called Best Practice. Staff are permitted access to Best Practice software only if approved by Service Street Medical Centre management and if they have signed our staff confidentiality agreement. Staff with access to Best Practice have their details stored within the Best Practice database, and passwords are required to gain entry. User accounts and passwords are also required to gain general access to PC's, including the use of emails.

## 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. If it is safe for us to do so, we endeavour to make your health information available to you. We require you to put this request in writing. We have a consent form for requesting medical information that is available at reception and our practice will respond within a reasonable time. Reception staff will confirm with your GP that the requested medical document or results are safe to share with you. We generally process such requests within one week, however delays may occur depending on the size of the information requested. Large files may incur a fee in the range of \$30-70 to cover staff time and materials.

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 may make such requests verbally or in writing to [manager@servicestreetmedical.com.au](mailto:manager@servicestreetmedical.com.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. Written complaints can be submitted:

- in person at reception
- via post at: 31 Service Street Medical Centre, Bairnsdale VICTORIA 3875 Ph: 03 5141 0811
- email: [manager@servicestreetmedical.com.au](mailto:manager@servicestreetmedical.com.au)

We will then attempt to resolve your concern in accordance with our resolution procedure. This involves directly notifying our Practice Manager and submitting your concern to that person within 24 hours. Our practice manager will investigate the situation and will endeavour to make contact with you within 30 days of receiving the complaint. If an opportunity for quality improvement is identified, we may log this in our quality improvement register (there is no personally identifiable information contained in the register) and make relevant staff aware of our new quality targets.

You may also contact the Victorian Health Complaints Commissioner. Generally, the Health Complaints Commissioner will require you to have contacted us in an attempt to resolve your complaint. For further information visit <https://hcc.vic.gov.au/> or call the Health Complaints Commissioner on 1300 582 113.

## Privacy and our website

Our online booking via Health Engine is a secure platform which collects personal information for the purpose of booking you an appointment with a doctor. Information collected and securely stored includes your full name, date of birth and a contact phone number or email.

## Policy review statement

This privacy statement is reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur to the management of health information at this practice. When changes have been made, we will place a notification in the waiting area of the practice.