

The Woods Medical Centre Privacy Policy

Current as of: October 2022

Introduction

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

What is your Personal Health Record?

A Personal Health Record stores personal information or an opinion about an identified person, or someone who is identifiable, whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.

What personal information do we collect?

The information we will collect about you includes your:

- name, date of birth, addresses, contact details, next of kin, occupation
- 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 / health fund details.

When you attend our practice to obtain services from our medical practitioners, we create a unique digital medical record for you. Every time a medical service is provided for you at our practice, new information is added to your medical record.

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. A consent form is included within our Patient Information Form.

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 (e.g., staff training).

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 new patient registration form.
2. While providing medical services, we may collect further personal information. We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email or SMS, telephone us, make an online appointment.
NB: Our practice does upload your information to My Health Record, e.g., via Shared Health Summaries and Event Summaries.
3. 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, power of attorney 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 party health providers via referral letter. Information used for a referral letter, is automatically extracted by our medical software via a template document. The templates in our medical software are manually populated with only the relevant and appropriate information as per each individual specialist referral.
- 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
- When it is required or authorised by law (e.g., court subpoenas) without your consent.
- 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 confidential dispute resolution process
- When there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (e.g., some diseases require mandatory notification)
- Our practice does not transfer patient information / documentation overseas. The transfer of all documentation is requested/completed before the patient leaves the country.

We use your personal information as necessary to manage our administration, including storage of data, and management of accounts and payment for the services provided to you. Specifically, we will use and, where necessary, disclose your personal information to:

- Obtain payment from, as appropriate, Medicare Australia, you, your private health insurance fund or from any organisation responsible for payment of any part of your account, such as the Department of Veterans Affairs;
- If the circumstances require, we may disclose your personal information to our insurers or those of our medical practitioners;
- Manage and store your personal information in a secure fashion, including management and storage by third parties such as cloud service providers with contractual relationships with our practice.

We may use your personal information to communicate with you, including to:

- Give you important information (including by SMS) about the products and services offered by our practice
- Respond to your online enquiries or process requests for appointments;
- Advertise to your particular products and services that may be of interest to you; and
- Send you appointment reminders (including by TEXT) in relation to obtaining services from our practice. This enables us to contact you, for example, to make follow-up appointments to discuss test results, or to remind you that you, or a dependant, are due for an immunisation, pap smear, annual health assessment or other type of consultation or test.

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, visual records (X-rays, CT scans, videos and photos), audio recordings
- Our practice stores all personal information securely: electronic format, with the allocation of password protected information systems, lockable secure cabinets and confidentiality agreements for staff and contractors.
- We take reasonable steps, and implement reasonable safeguards, to ensure the protection of the personal information that we hold. All patient information is handled securely and in accordance with professional duties of confidentiality.
- We must generally retain health information about an individual
 - for at least 7 years from the last occasion on which we provided a health service to the individual – if we collected the information when the individual was 18 years old or older; or
 - at least until the individual turns 25 – if we collected the information when the individual was less than 18 years old.

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 this request in writing inclusive of the patient's signature and date of the request. Our practice will respond within a reasonable time; 30 days inclusive from date of request, there is a cost for complying with this request.

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:

- 97 Scarborough Beach Road, SCARBOROUGH W.A. 6019
- practicemanager@thewoodsmedical.com.au
- In person at the clinic using the 'update your personal information' form
- There will be a fee for our costs involved in collating and providing you with access to any personal information. That fee is payable before access is given.

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 within 30 days of the date of complaint. Contact information as follows:

- Attention: The Practice Manager - 97 Scarborough Beach Road Scarborough WA 6019
- help@thewoodsmedical.com.au
- Telephone: 08 9245 1912 Fax: 08 9245 5260

You may also contact the OAIC. 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 Office of the Australian Information Commissioner OAIC on 1300 363 992

Privacy and our website

Our practice does not collect or send clinical information from email as it is not encrypted and is therefore an unsecured media. Information is collected to and from healthcare providers from within the practice's clinical software using a secure clinical messaging system. The use of a practice's clinical software means that a record of communication is automatically retained in the patient's medical record.

Policy review statement

The practice Privacy Policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur. Changes to our Privacy Policy will be flagged in our waiting room and included in our practice 'Healthnews' publication.