

Belmore Road Family Practice Privacy Policy

Current as of: 01/06/2024

**Belmore Road
Family Practice**

12 Belmore Road,
Lorn 2320

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 General Practitioners 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
- health fund 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 your registration
2. During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information including My Health Record (eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).

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3. We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email or SMS or telephone us.
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 (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, My Health Record (e.g., via 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 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.

Our practice may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services we offer to our

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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.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms. These include electronic records, X-Rays, paper records i.e.: telephone message pads and hard copies of correspondence that have been scanned into your file for a period of one month.

Our practice stores all personal information securely. Practice computers and servers comply with the RACGP computer security checklist, and we have a sound back up system and a contingency plan to protect the practice from loss of data.

Personal health information is kept where only those with authorisation can access it and is kept out of view of and unable to be accessed by the public (i.e., not left exposed on the reception desk, in the waiting room or other public areas; or left unattended in consulting or treatment rooms). To minimise this risk, automated screensavers are activated on all computer screens.

Members of the practice team have different levels of access to patient personal health information as appropriate to their roles and, to maintain security all computer hardware and software passwords are kept confidential and are not disclosed to others.

Any team members positioned in the practice common areas (e.g. reception and waiting areas) are made aware that conversations in these areas can often be overheard by patients and visitors and, therefore, they are to avoid discussing confidential and sensitive patient information in these areas.

Whenever sensitive documentation is to be discarded, our practice has a secure shredding bin with on-site shredding and any computer drives or memory sticks used are reformatted.

Correspondence

Our practice will only provide information via email that is of a general, non-urgent nature and we do not initiate email communication with patients. Please note that if you request a document be sent by email that you risk having that information intercepted or read by someone other than the intended recipient.

Where patient 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 and viewed only by a practice team 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 team members. Faxing is point to point and will, therefore, usually only be transmitted to one location.

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All facsimiles containing confidential information are sent only after ensuring the facsimile number dialled is the designated receiver before pressing 'Send'.

Details of confidential information sent by facsimile are recorded in a designated logbook which incorporates the date of transmission, patient name, description of the contents and the designated receiver (name and facsimile number).

A copy of the transmission report produced by the facsimile is kept as evidence that the facsimile was successfully transmitted, and as evidence the information was sent to the correct facsimile number. Facsimiles received are managed according to incoming correspondence protocols.

Our facsimile coversheets are marked as 'Confidential' and the following disclaimer notice is at the bottom of all outgoing facsimiles affiliated with the practice:

Disclaimer: Information contained in this fax may be confidential and legally privileged. It is intended for the use of the individual named or approved staff. If received in error, please destroy.

Patient consultations

Patient privacy and security of information is maximised during consultations by closing the consulting room doors. When the consulting, treatment room or administration office doors are closed, practice team members must ensure they knock and wait for a response prior to entering.

It is the general practitioner/healthcare team member's responsibility to ensure that prescription paper, patient health records and related personal information is kept secure if they leave their room during a consultation or treatment, or whenever they are not in attendance in the consulting/treatment room.

Patient health records

The physical health 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 *Privacy Act 1988*. Requests for access to a patient's health record will be acted upon only if the request is received in written format.

Both active and inactive patient health records are kept and stored securely. Our practice is considered paperless and 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.

Members of the practice team have different levels of access to personal patient health information as appropriate to their roles and to maintain security all computer hardware and software passwords are kept confidential and are not disclosed to others.

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. Our practice will undertake to forward the information requested within 10 working days of the fees being paid. Our

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fees are \$35 per file copy and an account will be forwarded to you on receiving a written request. For information requested by a third party, a signed authority by the patient will be required and the information will be forwarded on receipt of payment of account. The fees for this will be calculated at the AMA rate.

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, PO Box 40, Lorn NSW 2320 or by fax 0249 346850.

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.

All complaints should be forwarded to:

Belmore Road Family Medical Practice
Attention: The Practice Manager
PO Box 40,
Lorn, NSW 2320

Alternatively you can fax us on: 0249 346850.

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.

Policy review statement

This privacy policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur. If at any time we amend this policy it will be updated on our surgery slide show and in brochures in the waiting room.