

University of Melbourne  
Shepparton Medical Centre

## PRIVACY POLICY

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*Current as of 3/5/16*

### **Introduction**

This privacy policy provides 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. We are required by law to comply with the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs - available at [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)) and we have based this policy on the APPs.

### **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, or share your personal information?**

Our practice collects 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). We use your personal information to update your My Health Record, an electronic health record that ensures your other healthcare providers have access to your most up-to-date health information. We also use your personal information to prescribe your medications electronically – meaning that you do not need a hand-held script.

### **What personal information do we collect?**

The information we will collect about you includes:

- 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 will collect your personal information:

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.
3. We may also collect your personal information when you send us an email or SMS, telephone us, make an online appointment or communicate with us using social media.

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:

1. Your guardian or responsible person
2. Other involved healthcare providers, such as specialists, allied health professionals, hospitals, community health services and pathology and diagnostic imaging services
3. Your health fund, Medicare, or the Department of Veteran's Affairs (as necessary).

## **Who do we share your information with?**

We sometimes share your personal information:

1. 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
2. With other healthcare providers
3. When it is required or authorised by law (eg court subpoenas)
4. 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

5. To assist in locating a missing person
6. To establish, exercise or defend an equitable claim
7. For the purpose of confidential dispute resolution process
8. When there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (e.g. some diseases require mandatory notification)
9. During the course of providing medical services, through Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions (eTP), My Health Record system (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.

## **How do we store and protect your personal information?**

Your personal information is stored in a electronic health record kept securely on our own server. Only practice staff who require access to medical records have passwords enabling them to do so. We have confidentiality agreements in place for staff and contractors.

## **Sharing of de-identified information**

We run computer programs that remove names and other identifiers from data so that information can no longer be linked to an individual patient. This is called de-identification. The remaining information is no longer considered personal information under Australian Privacy Principles. We participate in structured quality improvement initiatives in which we share de-identified information, enabling us to understand how our practice compares to national standards.

We also provide de-identified data to Murray Primary Health Network, a Commonwealth government-funded agency responsible for improving our community's access to high quality healthcare.

You can opt out from your de-identified data being used in this way. Please feel free to contact the clinic if you have any questions.

## **How can you access and correct your health 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. Please put your request in writing to below address.

Our practice takes reasonable steps to ensure the information we hold is correct and up to date. From

time to time, we will ask you to verify your personal information held by us. You may also request that we correct or update your information.

Please put your request in writing to:

The Executive Director  
Shepparton Medical Centre  
49 Graham Street Shepparton VIC 3630

by mail or email ([reception@shepmed.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:reception@shepmed.unimelb.edu.au)) and our practice will respond within 30 days.

## **Complaints**

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 within 30 days.

You may also contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (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 336 002.

Alternatively, you may contact the Victorian Commissioner for Privacy and Data Protection. For further information visit [www.cpdp.vic.gov.au](http://www.cpdp.vic.gov.au) or call 1300 666 444.

## **Availability**

The current policy is provided to all new patients, and available on our website, the waiting room area, and upon request from reception.

## **Policy review**

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is up-to-date with changes in Australian privacy law.