

## 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 (e.g., staff training).

## What personal information do we collect?

The information we will collect about you to create your patient health record 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.

## Definition of a Health Record

Optimal Health Medical Centre defines a health record as a range of data and information containing patient information held in our electronic system. Your health record consists of.

- clinical notes
- investigations
- letters from other doctors and healthcare providers
- clinical images.

## 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.

Information may also be collected through electronic transfer of prescriptions (eTP), My Health Record, e.g., via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary.

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.

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 may share information with an overseas third-party entity based in the Philippines for administrative support purposes. We impose strict security and confidentiality requirements on how they handle your personal information, and they are required not to use it for any purpose other than the activities we have instructed them to perform. No personal information is stored on overseas servers; all information remains secure within our practice's systems located in Australia.

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.

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 e.g., electronic records, visual records X-rays, CT scans, videos, and photos.

**Our practice stores all personal information securely.**

Our practice securely stores and protect personal information, in electronic format, in protected information systems or in hard copy format in a secured environment. This practice does this by use of passwords, secure cabinets, confidentiality agreements for staff and contractors. However, you should not provide details that would jeopardise the effectiveness of your security measures.

## How we use document automation technologies, particularly so that only the relevant medical information is included in referral letters.

At Optimal Health Medical Centre, we utilise document automation technologies to streamline our processes, particularly ensuring that only relevant medical information is included in referral letters. Templates are meticulously crafted with specific fields tailored for inclusion in documentation produced by healthcare professionals, such as referrals. This approach ensures that patient privacy is maintained while facilitating efficient and accurate communication among medical practitioners. We prioritise the confidentiality and security of sensitive medical information in accordance with applicable data protection regulations.

## Real-time audio/visual recording, duplication, and storage of a consultation

To uphold the principles of transparency, patient autonomy, and privacy, our practice has adopted a policy regarding the real-time audio/visual recording, duplication, and storage of consultations, including those conducted via telehealth and remotely. While the practice currently does not engage in these activities, should there be a decision to implement such practices in the future, it is imperative that informed consent be obtained from patients prior to recording any consultations. This consent process will involve providing clear and comprehensive information to patients about the purpose, process, and implications of recording consultations. Patients will have the right to opt-out of the recording at any time without any impact on their care, and their privacy and confidentiality will be safeguarded through stringent security measures and compliance with relevant laws and regulations. Additionally, the practice will ensure that patients have access to information about their rights regarding recorded consultations and how they can access or request copies of the recordings if needed. This policy reflects our commitment to ethical and patient-centered care.

## 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 to the practice manager who will respond within 30 days.

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.

## 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. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure.

This should be in writing to the Practice Manager

Optimal Health Medical Centre  
Leppington  
Shop C1.3c  
108 Ingleburn Road  
Leppington, NSW, 2179

Optimal Health Medical Centre  
Gregory Hills  
Suite 1, Unit 15a  
1 Gregory Hills Drive  
Gledswood Hills, NSW, 2138

Optimal Health Medical Centre  
Rhodes Central  
Shop 211a  
6-14 Walker Street  
Rhodes, NSW, 2138

**OR** E: [rebecca@ohmc.com.au](mailto:rebecca@ohmc.com.au)

You will be contacted within 30 days

You may also contact the OAIC. Generally, the OAIC will require you to give them time to respond before they

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

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.

## Policy review statement

This privacy policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur. We will notify patients when you amend this policy.