

Privacy Policy

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 (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 authorized 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.
3. 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.
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).
 - Our practice may collect your personal information when having a Telephone Consultation, this information is recorded in your file (phone number and reason for a Telephone Consultation).

Do we use AI to collect your personal or health information?

1. Your practitioner may use artificial intelligence, to record and summarise your consultation and store the transcript of the appointment in your medical record. These notes will be reviewed by your practitioner to ensure they accurately reflect your appointment before they are relied upon to provide medical advice.
2. We cannot, and do not, determine or instruct the independent medical practitioners about how they deliver their medical services to you, including which artificial intelligence program they utilise for their patient consults. Our Practice therefore cannot make any warranties or guarantees on how the specific artificial intelligence program will collect, store or use data. Please direct any queries or concerns you have in relation to the artificial intelligence program directly to your practitioner. They will also be able to provide you with access to the relevant terms and conditions and privacy policy for the specific artificial intelligence program they use. We will not be liable under any circumstances for any damages of any kind recognised by law due to the artificial intelligence program and liability is limited to the extent of our negligence or misconduct. We will participate in updating you on your practitioner's behalf if need be of any communications received from your practitioner in relation to the artificial intelligence program. Any complaints should be sent directly to the owner of the artificial intelligence program.

Use of AI Medical Reception Agents

Some of our affiliated practices may use an AI Medical Reception Agent to assist with coordinating appointments and responding to patient enquiries. These AI agents may collect your personal and health information as part of this process, solely for the purpose of supporting your care and facilitating efficient communication with the practice.

You have the right to decline to interact with the AI agent and may request to speak with a human receptionist at any time. Your choice will not affect your access to care or services.

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 (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: some diseases require mandatory notification)
- during the course of providing medical services, through eTP, My Health Record (eg: 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.

When generating Referral letters, our practice software auto populates the required fields. Our GP's will then remove any unnecessary personal information.

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. This by electronic records, visual records such as X-rays.

Our practice stores all personal information securely. All personal information is kept in electronic format, where software is password protected. All staff and contractors are obliged to abide by a confidentiality agreement.

Retention & Destruction of records

When our practice is considering destroying clinical records for patients who are no longer patients of the practice, have not been seen for many years, or who have outdated results in their records, we consult with our medical defense organization, so that we understand our legal requirements and manage the risks. For maximum security, all outdated personal information will be destroyed by shredding. If your practice has a policy to destroy these records, you must also have a system that provides timely identification of information that is no longer relevant. You also need to have processes for the disposal of hard drives and other storage media.

In accordance with Queensland's legislation our clinic retains medical records of adult patients for a minimum seven years from the date of last entry and for children until they would have reached 25 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 you to put this request in writing to the Practice Manager via email – manager@balgalmedical.com.au and our practice will respond within a reasonable time. A fee may be applicable for this service.

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 [manager@ balgalmedical.com.au](mailto:manager@balgalmedical.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. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure. All complaints are to be directed to the Practice Manager in writing – [manager@ balgalmedical.com.au](mailto:manager@balgalmedical.com.au) or by letter. Contact will be made back to the patient by the Practice Manager within a 2-week period.

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. You may also contact the Health Ombudsman at <https://www.oho.qld.gov.au/>.

Policy review statement

This policy is reviewed annually.