

Purpose

This leaflet aims to clearly explain how personal information about You and Your health is recorded and managed in this practice. Your doctor will be happy to discuss this with you. We also have a written privacy policy describing how we manage personal information. You can receive a copy of our policy at reception available to all patients or access a digital version via our practice website.

Personal information

The 'personal information' we collect includes your name, date of birth, address/es, contact details, Medicare number, healthcare identifiers and health fund details. Medical information may include medical history and any care you may need. GPs need information about your past and present health in order to provide you with high-quality care. This practice ensures your health is discussed with your doctor in private.

Our practice follows the RACGP 'Standards for General Practices' 5th Edition for the management of health information in General Practice. The standards incorporate federal and state privacy legislation, and the Australian Privacy Principles, which requires that your personal information is kept private and secure consistently.

Your medical records

Your doctor and this practice takes steps to ensure that your medical records:

- are accurate, complete, well-organised and legible
- are up-to-date
- contain enough information to allow another doctor to care for you
- contain a summary of your care; and
- can be used to remind you, with your permission, to return for follow up, check-ups and reviews.

Your doctors will only collect information which is relevant to your medical care. If you are uncertain as to why information is being requested, please ask your doctor or speak with our friendly staff.

Providing your information to other GPs

The doctor(s) in this practice respect your right to decide how your personal health information is used or disclosed. (for example: to other doctors)

It is important that other people involved in your care, such as other doctors, medical specialists and other healthcare professionals, are informed of the relevant parts of your medical history, so they can provide the best care for you. After discussion with you, your doctor will write a letter to the other doctor (i.e., referral), which will be faxed, sent via Medical Objects (secure electronic encrypted messaging for doctors and specialists) or in circumstances posted and a copy will be provided to you. In all but exceptional circumstances personal information that identifies you will be sent to other people only with your consent examples is Insurance companies. Gaining your consent is the guiding principle.

In most group practices it is customary for all our doctors in the practice to have access to all your medical records. If you have any concerns about other doctors at this practice being able to see your records, please discuss your concerns with your treating doctor and the practice manager.

Providing your information to others

Our doctors will not share your personal health information with a third party unless:

- you have consented to the disclosure and sharing, or
- this disclosure is necessary because you are at risk of harm without treatment and your unable to give consent – example you might be unconscious after an accident; or
- your doctor is legally obliged to disclose the information (e.g., notification of certain infectious disease or suspected child abuse, or a subpoena or court order); or
- the information is necessary to obtain Medicare payments or other health insurance rebates; or
- this disclosure is necessary for the doctors in the practice to carry out a review of their practice for the purpose of improving the quality of care provided and the activity has been approved under Commonwealth or State Legislation or by a Medical College. This provides safeguards to protect the confidentiality of the information provided; or
- this is an overriding public interest in the release of the information.
- In any of the above cases only information which

is necessary to achieve the objective will be provided.

Using health information for quality improvement and research

This practice may use patient health information to assist in improving the quality of care we give to all our patients, by reviewing the treatments used in the practice.

Your information held by the practice may be used in research projects to improve healthcare in the community; however, this information will not include data that can identify you. You will be normally be informed if your information is to be used for this purpose and will have the opportunity to refuse to have your unidentified information used in this way.

The information used for research, including the publication of research results, will not be in a form that would allow you to be identified, unless the research serves an important public interest. In such cases, identifiable medical records can be used for medical research without your consent under guidelines issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council and must be approved by an official ethics committee.

Before providing such identified information, your GP will discuss with you the information that she or he is obliged to disclose. Wherever practicable the information used for research will not be in a form that would enable you to be identified. The publication of research results which use your information will never be in a form that enables you to be identified.

Security of information in the practice

Australian privacy legislation applies to all personal health information recorded in electronic and paper records. All records must be kept secure to protect against unauthorized access. This practice complies with these requirements to protect your information.

Access to your health information

You may ask practice staff about any aspect of your healthcare, including information contained in your record. You can request access to your medical record and any other information the practice records about you.

If you request access to your medical record, your GP will need to consider if there may be a risk of physical or mental harm to you or any other person that may result from disclosure of your health information. Your GP may need to remove any information that will affect the privacy of other individuals.

Sharing information is important for good communication between you and your doctor including treating medical teams to promote good quality healthcare. Information in your record can be provided to you by accurate and up to date summary of your care, for instance, if you are moving away and are transferring to a new doctor. Do not hesitate to ask your doctor if you want a summary of your care. If you request a summary or direct access to your full medical record your doctor will need to take out any information provided by others on a confidential basis. Your doctor will also need to consider the risk of physical or mental harm to you or any other person which may result from disclosure of your health information.

Your doctor will be pleased to provide a full explanation of the health summary or medical record provided. This will normally require a single or double appointment specifically for that purpose.

Depending on what is involved, you may be asked to contribute to the cost of providing the information especially if extensive printing is involved.

Resolving your concerns regarding the privacy of your health information

Direct marketing

This practice does not engage in direct marketing.

Resolving concerns regarding the privacy of your health information

If you have any concerns regarding the privacy of your personal health information or the accuracy of the information held by the practice, you should

discuss these with your doctor. Inaccurate information will be corrected or your concerns noted in your record. For legal reasons, the original notes will be retained.

Anonymity and pseudonyms

The Privacy Act provides that individuals must have the option of not identifying themselves, or of using a pseudonym, when dealing with our practice, except in certain circumstances, such as where it is impracticable for us to deal with you if you have not identified yourself.

Overseas disclosure

We may disclose your personal information to any practice or individual who assists us in providing services (such as where you have come from overseas and had your health record transferred from overseas or have treatment continuing from an overseas provider). This will be completed with your consent.

Updates to this policy

This policy will be reviewed from time to time to take account new changes made. A notification of the updates to the policy will be displayed at our reception desk.

Further information on privacy legislation is available from:

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner
1300 363 992

Office of the Information Commissioner
Queensland – 07 3234 7373

Community and Health Services Complaints Office 02 62052222

Health Complaints Commissioner
1800 136 066

Practice Contact Details
Kristina Hepburn- Practice Manager
Cnr Teviot Road and Pub Lane Greenbank 4124
Phone: 3200 0197
Fax: 3200 0922
Email: greenbankpm@medicross.com.au



Protecting Your Personal Information & Privacy in our practice at Medicross Greenbank

Updated: July 2023
Review: January 2024