

Privacy Policy

Introduction

To ensure patients who receive care from Cairns GP Medical Centre are comfortable entrusting their health information to the Practice. This policy provides information to patients as to how their personal information (which includes their health information) is collected and used within the Practice, and the circumstances in which we may disclose it to third parties.

Purpose and Context

- Cairns GP Medical Centre is committed to ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of all personal information affiliated with Cairns GP Medical Centre's business undertakings.
- Cairns GP Medical Centre follows the terms and conditions of privacy and confidentiality in accordance to the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) as per schedule 1 of the Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012 (Cth), forming part of the Privacy Act 1988 ('the Act')
- The purpose of this Privacy Policy is to clearly communicate how Cairns GP Medical Centre collects and manages personal information.
- This policy will guide the Practice staff in meeting these legal obligations. It also details to patients how the Practice uses their personal information. The policy must be made available to patients upon request.
- The point of contact regarding any queries regarding this policy is the Practice Manager, manager@cairnsgp.com.au

Practice procedure

The Practice will:

- Provide a copy of this policy upon request
- Ensure staff comply with the APP and deal appropriately with inquiries or concerns
- Take such steps as are reasonable in the circumstances to implement practices, procedures and systems to ensure compliance with the APP and deal with inquiries or complaints
- Collect personal information for the primary purpose of managing a patient's healthcare and for financial claims and payments

The Practice's staff will take reasonable steps to ensure patients understand:

- What information has been and is being collected
- Why the information is being collected, and whether this is due to a legal requirement
- How the information will be used or disclosed
- Why and when their consent is necessary
- The Practice's procedures for access and correction of information, and responding to complaints of information breaches, including by providing this policy

Patient Consent:

The Practice will only interpret and apply a patient's consent for the primary purpose for which it was provided. The Practice staff must seek additional consent from the patient if the personal information collected may be used for any other purpose.

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:

- 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

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Our Practice stores all personal information securely. Eg – electronic format, either in protected information systems or in hard copy format in a secured environment, as well as the use of a combination of the following including passwords, secure cabinets, confidentiality agreements for Staff and Contractors. A patient's personal information may be held at the Practice in various forms.

- Paper Records
- Electronic Records
- Visual – X-Rays, CT Scans, Videos and Photos
- Audio Recordings

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?

- Practice staff collect patients' personal and demographic information via registration when patients present to the Practice for the first time. Patients are encouraged to pay attention to the collection statement attached to/within the form and information about the management of collected information and patient privacy.
- During the course of providing medical services, the Practice's Healthcare Practitioners will consequently collect further personal information
- Personal information may also be collected from the patient's guardian or responsible person (where practicable and necessary), or from any other involved healthcare specialist.
- The practice participates in the Personally Controlled Electronic Health Record System (PECHR). This record is designed to contain an electronic summary of your key health information. It is the patient's choice to register for and control their eHealth record. The patient's Individual Health Identifier is stored in the Patient's electronic record.
- The Practice holds all personal information securely, in electronic format using a password protected information systems or in hard copy format in an access controlled environment.

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, Pathology and Diagnostic Imaging Services
- Your Health Fund, Medicare, or the Department of Veteran's Affairs (as necessary)

Use and Disclosure of Information

Personal information will only be used for the purpose of providing medical services and for claims and payments, unless otherwise consented to. Transfer of personal information for the provision of medical services is done using an encrypted messaging system, fax or letter.

Some disclosure may occur to third parties engaged by or for the Practice for business purposes, such as accreditation or for the provision of information technology. These third parties are required to comply with this policy.

The Practice will inform the patient where there is a statutory requirement to disclose certain personal information (for example, some diseases require mandatory notification).

The Practice will not disclose personal information to any third party other than in the course of providing medical services, without full disclosure to the patient or the recipient, the reason for the information transfer and full consent from the patient.

The Practice will not disclose personal information to anyone outside Australia without need and without patient consent.

Who do we share your personal information with?

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 Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions (eTP), MyHealth Record / PCEHR system (eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).

Only people that need to access your information will be able to do so. Other than 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.

The Practice evaluates all unsolicited information it receives to decide if it should be kept, acted on or destroyed.

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 whether that be in person at the Practice's front counter, directly to their GP, by email (must be signed), or in the regular mail. Our practice will respond within a reasonable time. Eg – Usually within 30 days. Please note, there may be fee/s associated with providing this information, not excessive. In saying this, patients are not charged for making the request – only for the costs of complying with the request.

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 your personal information held by our Practice is correct and up-to-date. You may also request that we correct or update your information, and you should make such requests in writing addressed to the Practice Manager, Cairns GP Medical Centre, PO Box 872, Cairns North Qld 4870.

How can 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.

Contact details of our Practice are as follows –

Cairns GP Medical Centre
 PO Box 872
 Cairns North
 Phone – 07 40317968

We endeavour to turnaround requests 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 or call the OAIC on 1300 336 002.

Policy Review Statement

This privacy policy is reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur. Notification to our patients, when we amend this policy will be by display at our Practice reception, highlighting the changes.