

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 if relevant

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.

Please note, all Medicare claims need to be made using your correct details. Should you choose to visit this practice under a pseudonym, rebates will not apply.

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 can also be collected through My Health Record – e.g. via Shared Health Summary and/or Event Summary.
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).

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, 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.

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 including; as electronic records, paper-based records and a visual records (X-rays, CT Scans, videos and photos)

Our practice stores all personal information securely. Prestons Family Doctors is operated on a secure network maintained by firewalls, passwords, secure cabinets, confidentiality agreements of all staff and contractors.

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, consent forms are available on request. Our practice will respond generally within 30 days. There may be a cost involved in 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 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 at prestonsfamilydoctors@gmail.com

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.

Practice Manager
Prestons Family Doctors
Shop A3/57 Minnamurra Cct, Prestons NSW 2170
Email: prestonsfamilydoctors@gmail.com

Requests will be acknowledged in writing within 14 days from the date on which the application was received and the Practice Manager will process the request within 60 days from the date on which the application was received. Applicants will be advised in writing of the Practice's decision.

Policy review statement

This privacy policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur. All changes will be displayed on the Health and Medical Services website.

Current as of: February 2023
Review date: February 2024

INTERNET AND EMAIL POLICY

Prestons Family Doctors recognises the practice team requires access to email and the internet to assist in the efficient and safe delivery of health care services to our patients. Prestons Family Doctors supports the right of staff to have access to reasonable personal use of the internet and email communications in the workplace using the devices and networks provided by the practice.

Staff are mindful that even if Patients have provided electronic contact details, they may not be proficient in communicating via electronic means and client choice should be obtained before using electronic communication.

Patients can obtain advice or information related to their care or appointment reminders by electronic means, where the doctor determines that a face-to-face consultation is unnecessary. Electronic communication includes: email, fax, and SMS.

Practice staff and doctors determine how they communicate electronically with clients, both receiving and sending messages. All significant electronic contact with Patients is recorded in the client health records.

Practice staff and doctors should be aware of alternative modes of communication used by the disabled.

Patients are advised in Prestons Family Doctors information sheet that they can request our written policy on receiving and returning electronic communication.

Purpose and Objectives

This policy sets out guidelines for acceptable use of internet and email by the practice team, contractors and other staff of Prestons Family Doctors. Internet and email is provided primarily to assist the team carry out their duties of employment.

Scope

The internet and email policy applies to the practice team, contractors and other staff of Prestons Family Doctors who access the internet and email on practice owned devices, including, but not limited to list of practice owned devices which have email capability the practice team can access as part of their work, internet and network access this could include desk phones, smartphones, tablets, laptops, desktop computers, iPads and other tablet devices to perform their work.

Use of the internet by the practice team, contractors and other staff is permitted and encouraged where this supports the goals and objectives of Prestons Family Doctors access to the internet is a privilege and the practice team, contractors and other staff must adhere to this policy.

Violation of these policies could result in disciplinary and/or legal action, termination of employment, the practice team, contractors and other staff being held personally liable for

damages caused by any violations of this policy. All employees are required to confirm they have understood and agree to abide by this email and internet policy.

Policy Content

The practice team, contractors and other staff may use the internet and email access provided by the Prestons Family Doctors for:

- Any work and work-related purposes
- Limited personal use
- More extended personal use and specific circumstances (see below)

Limited personal use of email and internet

Limited personal use is permitted where it:

- Is used infrequently and briefly
- Does not interfere with the duties of the practice team, contractors and other staff
- Does not interfere with the operation of the practice
- Does not impact on the practice electronic storage capacity
- Does not decrease the practice network performance (eg large email attachments can decrease system performance and potentially cause system outages)
- Does not incur any additional expense for the practice
- Does not violate any legislation
- Does not compromise any confidentiality requirements of the practice and any personal opinion is clearly stated as such

Examples of what could be considered reasonable personal use might include:

- Conducting a brief online bank transaction
- Paying a bill
- Sending a brief personal email, similar to making a brief personal phone call

Unacceptable internet and email use

The practice team, contractors and other staff may not use internet or email access provided by Prestons Family Doctors to:

- Create or exchange messages that are offensive, harassing, obscene or threatening
- Visiting web sites containing objectionable (including pornographic) or criminal material
- Exchanging any confidential or sensitive information held by the practice
- Create, store or exchange information in violation of copyright laws
- Use the internet-enabled activities such as gambling, gaming, conducting a business or conducting illegal activities
- Creating or exchanging advertisements, solicitations, chain letters and other unsolicited illegal activities

- Create or exchange advertisements, solicitations, chain letters and other unsolicited or bulk email
- Playing electronic or online games in work time.

Communication with Patients via electronic means

(e.g. email and Fax) is conducted with appropriate regard to the privacy Laws relating to health information and confidentiality of the Patients health information or the risks associated with electronic communication in that the information could be intercepted or read by someone other than the intended recipient.

Staff and Patients using email/SMS or other forms of electronic messaging

Staff and Patients should be aware that it is not possible to guarantee that electronic communications will be private. All personal health information or sensitive information sent by email must be securely encrypted.

Patients can request information to be sent via email (without encryption) however, Patients must be informed this form of communication is not secure. Consent must be obtained from the client to release the information in this format.

When an email message is sent or received in the course of a person's duties, that message is a business communication and therefore constitutes an official record.

Internal or external parties, including Patients may send electronic messages. Messages from Patients or those of clinical significance require a response to confirm receipt and should be documented in the client medial record if appropriate.

Employees should be aware that electronic communications could, depending on the technology, be forwarded, intercepted, printed and stored by others. Electronic mail is the equivalent of a post card.

Staff members have full accountability for emails sent in their name or held in their mailbox and are expected to utilise this communication tool in an acceptable manner.

Prestons Family Doctors reserves the right to check individual email as a precaution to fraud, viruses, workplace harassment or breaches of confidence by employees. Inappropriate use of the email facility will be fully investigated and may be grounds for dismissal.

Prestons Family Doctors uses an email disclaimer notice on outgoing emails that are affiliated with the Health Service.

The disclaimer is as follows:

PLEASE NOTE:

The information contained in this e-mail is confidential. It is intended solely for the addressee. If you receive this e-mail by mistake please notify us. You must not disclose or use the information in it unless we authorise you to do so. The opinions and views in this email are those of the sender and may not necessarily reflect the views of Prestons Family Doctors This note also confirms that this

e-mail message has been virus scanned and although no computer viruses were detected, Prestons Family Doctors accepts no liability for any consequential damage resulting from e-mail containing any computer viruses.

Accessing the Internet

The Internet is a vast computer network, comprised of individual networks and computers all around the world that communicate with each other to allow information sharing between users. It is important to adopt secure practices when accessing and using the Internet.

The Internet can be accessed by all members of staff; however, excessive use of the Internet is not acceptable.

Staff members are encouraged to use the Internet for research activities pertaining to their role, however, should be aware that usage statistics are recorded and submitted to management as required.

Prestons Family Doctors reserves the right to check individual's internet history as a precaution to fraud, viruses, workplace harassment or breaches of confidence by employees. Inappropriate use of the internet facility will be fully investigated and may be grounds for dismissal.

Prestons Family Doctors Website

In complying with the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000, our practice provides the following advice to users of our website about the collection, use and disclosure of personal information.

The aim of this advice is to inform users of this site about:

- what personal information is being collected;
- who is collecting personal information;
- how personal information is being used;
- access to personal information collected on this site; and
- security of personal information collected on this site.

Prestons Family Doctors privacy policy is posted on the website and available for download. The website is continually monitored to ensure it is kept current and up to date. It contains the minimum information required on the Prestons Family Doctors information sheet. Any changes to Prestons Family Doctors information sheet are also reflected on the website.

COLLECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Welcome to the Prestons Family Doctors. Please read this consent form carefully prior to signing. This general practice collects information from you for the primary purpose of providing quality health care. We require you to provide us with your personal details and a full medical history so that we may properly assess, diagnose and treat illnesses and medical conditions, ensuring we are proactive in your health care. To enable ongoing care, and in keeping with the Privacy Act 1988 and Australian Privacy Principles, we wish to provide you with sufficient information on how your personal information may be used or disclosed and record your consent or restrictions to this consent. Your personal information will only be used for the purposes for which it was collected or as otherwise permitted by law, and we respect your right to determine how your information is used or disclosed. The information we collect may be collected by a number of different methods and examples may include: medical test results, notes from consultations, Medicare details, data collected from observations and conversations with you, and details obtained from other health care providers (e.g. specialist correspondence). By signing below, you (as a patient/parent/guardian) are consenting to the collection of your personal information, and that it may be used or disclosed by the practice for the following purposes:

- Administrative purposes in running our general practice.
- Billing purposes, including compliance with Medicare requirements.
- Follow-up reminder/recall notices for treatment and preventative healthcare. This practice contacts patients via SMS appointment reminders and health reminders and this is one of the purposes for collection of mobile phone numbers.
- Disclosure to others involved in your health care, including treating doctors and specialists outside this medical practice. This may occur through referral to other doctors, or for medical tests and in the reports or results returned to us following the referrals.
- Accreditation and quality assurance activities to improve individual and community health care and practice management.
- For legal related disclosure as required by a court of law.
- For the purposes of research only where de-identified information is used.
- To allow medical students and staff to participate in medical training/teaching using only de-identified information.
- To comply with any legislative or regulatory requirements e.g. notifiable diseases.
- For use when seeking treatment by other doctors in this practice.

At all times, we are required to ensure your details are treated with the utmost confidentiality. Your records are very important and we will take all steps necessary to ensure they remain confidential.

Please select the check box below if you understand and agree to the following statements in relation to our use, collection, privacy and disclosure of your patient information.