**Whites Hill Family Medical - Privacy Policy**

**Current as of: 25 June 2024**

**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.

**Whites Hill Family Medical itself is not on social media. No social media site e.g., Facebook, Instagram may be created for the practice without permission from the Practice Owners.**

**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:

* name, date of birth, address, 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

To assist us in providing you with the best possible care, you will also be asked for information about:

* if you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
* your Next of Kin and/or an Emergency Contact

lifestyle information such as nutrition, exercise, smoking & alcohol

* cultural information such as languages spoken & country of origin

In addition, the Patient Health Record also includes the following information:

* medical information including current and previous medical history, medications/drugs/treatments used by the patient, allergies, adverse events, immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors, name of any health service provider or medical specialist to whom the patient is referred, copies of any letters of referrals and copies of any reports back

**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.
3. 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)

We inform you via:

* brochures in the waiting area
* Patient Information Sheet
* New Patient Forms – “consent to share information”
* verbally if appropriate

**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 Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions, 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.

Our practice may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services we offer to our patients through research and analysis of our patient data.

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 is stored electronically via a secure medical program. This information is backed up daily. Our medical software ensures that only relevant information is populated to be included in outgoing information, eg referral letters.

**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 and our practice will respond within a reasonable timeframe.

If the request is for patient information to be disclosed overseas, we require this in writing and patient information will be sent via Registered Mail.

As email is not secure, health information will only be transferred in this way with your prior consent.

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 do we use document automation technologies?**

As we ensure that your privacy always remains our utmost concern, electronic documents generated by our practice such as referrals, medical certificates etc, utilise appropriate and secure document automation technologies.

Our practice utilises a secure medical software, which has a word processing application to generate documents as and when required. This Word processing application has algorithms to automatically import strictly relevant medical information only, required for the patient and the documentation.

The medical software has proper security authentication protocols with unique user credential which can only be accessed by authorised Practice staff according to their roles and responsibilities.

**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 to the Practice Manager at Shop 10, 25 Samuel St, Camp Hill 4152. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure.

If you need to take the matter further you may also contact the OAIC. For further information visit [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au) or call the OAIC on 1300 363 992.

**Privacy and emailing**

Communication with patients via electronic means is conducted with appropriate regard to privacy. Due to the complexities of email security, Whites Hill Family Medical does not communicate via email for the purpose of making appointments, requesting repeat scripts or repeat referrals.

**Policy review statement**

This privacy policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur and will be updated via our website. Additionally, it will be reviewed in line with any changes to State of Federal Privacy Laws, as and when required.

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