



North Coast Medical
Centre BYRON INTEGRATIVE HEALTH

North Coast Medical Centre

Privacy Policy

Updated – August 2018

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 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. Information can also be collected through electronic transfer such as prescriptions (eTP) and My Health Record.
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).

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.

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 such as electronic, visual records (X-rays, CT scans, videos, photos, audio recordings).

Our practice stores all personal information securely. Our practice ensures that our computers and servers comply with the RACGP computer security checklist and that:

- Computers are only accessible via individual password access to those in the practice team who have appropriate levels of authorization.
- Computers have screen savers or other automated privacy protection devices are enabled to prevent unauthorized access to computers.
- Servers are backed up and checked at frequent intervals, consistent with a documented business continuity plan.
- Back up information is stored in a secure off site environment.
- Computers are protected by antivirus software that is installed and updated regularly
- Computers connected to the internet are protected by appropriate hardware/software firewalls.
- We have a business continuity plan that has been developed, tested and documented.

Electronic data transmission of patient health information from our practice is in a secure format and we will not provide details that would jeopardise the effectiveness of the security measures.

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 patients to complete a *Personal Health Information Request Form* which outlines the type of information being requested, and in what format the patient requests to receive the information. Completion of this form ensures correct processing is undertaken and appropriate consent is obtained, particularly where the patient is requesting their information be sent to them through an unsecure method (i.e. facsimile, mail, email). Requests will be completed within 30 days depending on the request and fees may apply.

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 verbally or in writing through reception.

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. You can contact the practice via the email: info@northcoastmedicalcentre.com.au or via the practice contact details. We will respond to your query within 30 days.

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 can also contact Health Care Complaints Commission, Locked Bag 18, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012
Phone: 9219 7444

Policy review statement

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the National Privacy Principles to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur. Patients will be notified of changes on our website and in our reception information booklet when this document is amended.