

# **PARKWOOD MEDICAL CENTRE**

## **PRIVACY POLICY**

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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.

When you register as a patient of our practice, you provide consent for our GPs and practice staff to collect, access and use your personal information so they can provide you with the best possible healthcare. The privacy of a patient is considered paramount. If we need to use your information for anything else, we will seek additional consent from you to do this.

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 or insurance purposes).

#### **Patient health record:**

This can be defined as: information concerning a patient's health, medical history, past or present medical care; and which is in a form that enables or could enable the patient to be identified. It can also include information about an individual's express wishes concerning current and future health services.

#### **Personal information we collect will generally include:**

- 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 and/or health fund details

Per the Privacy Act, 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.

#### **Our Practice may collect your 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, e.g via participation in the My Health Record eHealth service, via Shared Health Summary or Event Summary.
3. We may also collect your personal information when you telephone us, make an online appointment or send us an email.
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
  - Medicare, the Department of Veterans' Affairs (as necessary), or your health fund.

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### **Patient Consent:**

At their first visit, patients are asked to complete a “Patient Details form” which outlines some of our important principles about how we handle information. This information will not be used in any other way except as defined in this policy. All personal information is securely held, in electronic format, in protected information systems or in hard copy format in a secured environment.

### **Personal Information collected may be used or disclosed as follows:**

- with other healthcare providers – pathology and diagnostic imaging services, hospitals, specialist medical practitioners, and other health providers involved in your care which may include surgeons, nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, psychologists, dietitians, audiologists, podiatrists, and, the ambulance service
- for improving quality of care, or, for preventative care purposes in our patient recall system in order to provide continuity of care
- to obtain Medicare payments or other health insurance rebates
- when it is required or authorised by law (eg court subpoenas, police, insurers), in many cases you will be notified of this by the Practice Manager or your GP
- 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 Australian Privacy Principles and this policy
- 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 a claim, or, for confidential dispute resolution process
- when there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (e.g. diseases requiring mandatory notification)
- during the course of providing medical services, through eTP or My Health Record.

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.

### **Disclosure to third parties:**

Personal health information is disclosed to third parties, only where patient consent has been obtained. Documents which contain patient health information sent to other health care providers, e.g., referrals, are discussed with patients prior to their distribution.

GPs will explain the nature of any information about the patient to be provided to other people, for example, in letters of referral to hospitals or specialists. The patient consents to the provision of this information by agreeing to take the letter to the hospital or specialist, or by agreeing for the practice to send it. GPs and staff will disclose to third parties only that information which is required to fulfil the needs of the patient. These principles apply to the personal information provided to a treating team (for example, a physiotherapist or consultant physician also involved in a person’s care). The principles also apply where the information is transferred by other means, for example, via secure electronic means.

We will not share your personal information with anyone outside Australia (unless under exceptional circumstances that are permitted by law) without your consent.

This Practice does not and will not use your personal information in direct marketing.

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### **Personal information is securely stored at our Practice:**

The Practice computer system is used to record health information and to receive results directly from Pathology laboratories, Radiology clinics, specialists and other allied health service providers. This information is specifically downloaded into our system using a direct connection which ensures that the information remains confidential and enables the information to be electronically incorporated into your health record.

The computer system is password protected. Each GP, nurse and administrative staff member have a separate password to access the system. The system undergoes regular maintenance to ensure that all data remains secure and retrievable. A routine data back-up is done on a daily basis, and stored offsite.

Paper records are not used but when received from others, are scanned to electronic file, then stored in secure filing cabinets in a supervised area

According to relevant laws, we keep health information for a minimum of 7 years from the date of last entry in the patient record (children's records must be kept until the patient attains or would have attained the age of 25). Medical records which are not on the premises are stored with a professional Document Storage company. Any record or information which does not need to be stored or retained is shredded before disposal.

### **Accessing your information, complaints and further information**

Patients requests for access to own health information are documented and incorporated into the medical record.

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. 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, or, if it will affect the privacy of other individuals, or, any other legal impediment to access, and may need to remove any such information. Your GP is able to provide a full explanation of the health summary or medical record you are provided access to. We require you to put this request in writing and the Practice will respond within a reasonable time, usually within 30 days. It is unlawful to charge you a fee for requesting access to personal health information, but you may be asked to contribute for the cost of providing such access (e.g. file search, copying or printing records) as long as the fee is not excessive, having regard to the expense and inconvenience for the Practice and/or GP.

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 or by email to the Practice for the attention of the Practice Manager

We take complaints and concerns regarding privacy seriously. If you are dissatisfied or concerned about the privacy or accuracy of your personal information, or the process of obtaining your information, the Practice has two appointed Privacy Officers who will assist you with your query or complaint. The Practice Manager and Senior Practice Nurse are both experienced staff members and would be happy to work with you to resolve your concerns.

## **PARKWOOD MEDICAL CENTRE PRIVACY POLICY**

You should express any privacy concerns you may have in writing to:

The Privacy Officer/Practice Manager  
Parkwood Medical Centre  
U1/86 Vellgrove avenue  
Parkwood WA 6147  
or email: [pmc.reception@parkwoodmc.com.au](mailto:pmc.reception@parkwoodmc.com.au)

We will attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure, usually within 30 days of receipt.

**Further information on privacy legislation is available from:**

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) 1300 363 992 [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)  
Health and Disability Services Complaints Office WA (HaDSCO) – 1800 813 583  
[www.hadSCO.wa.gov.au](http://www.hadSCO.wa.gov.au)

This privacy policy will be reviewed annually, or more frequently to ensure it is in accordance with any legal or professional guidelines/changes which may occur. Notification of this will be available on our website and within the Practice

**Reviewed: December 2022**  
**Next Review: December 2023**