



Hamilton Doctors privacy policy

Current as of: 23/10/2021

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.

Definition of Patient Health Record

A patient health record is a collection of clinical information pertaining to a patient's physical and mental health, compiled from different sources. Health records contain demographic data, next of kin, GP details, and most of the following: medical history; examinations; diagnoses; treatment (including surgical procedures and drug therapy); results from investigations – labs (e.g. biochemistry, haematology, and pathology), imaging (e.g. plain films, scans); alerts and warnings (e.g. allergies, blood group); record of preventative measures (immunisations, screenings – breast, cervical, faecal, occult blood); nursing records; clinical correspondence and referrals for treatment; consent forms for surgical procedures; theatre reports; discharge letters; post-mortem reports. Health records are maintained by, or on behalf of, the health professional concerned with the patient's care and are maintained as private confidential documents.

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.

Those patients who refuse to provide our practice with their correct identity, with corresponding documents, will be required to pay for any and all consultations with the doctors of the practice. Any fees charged will not be able to be submitted to Medicare for a rebate.

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. Information can also be collected through electronic transfer of prescriptions (eTP), My Health Record, eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary.
4. We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email, telephone us, make an online appointment or communicate with us using social media. Please not due to security concerns we request you do not send your private medical information
5. 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?

Hamilton Doctors uses Best Practice Clinical Software and uses documentation automation technologies, so that only relevant information is included in referral letters.

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.

Hamilton Doctors 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. The use of identifiable patient health information for research will not be undertaken without the patients expressed written consent.

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 may be stored at our practice in various forms. The majority of our records are in electronic format. Any correspondence, received in an alternative method eg: post, are then scanned into your personal records and the paper document is then shredded. X-rays, Ct scans etc are not held by the practice and are the responsibility of the patient. Documented photos are stored in your electronic records. Our practice stores all personal information securely. All electronic patient records, personal information, financial information etc are securely stored using individual passwords, confidentiality agreements for any staff and or contractors entering the premises. This system is maintained both within the practice, and via our IT consultants. Encrypted Back-ups of all data are performed daily and held securely in the event of a fire etc

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.

Hamilton Doctors 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 time. Generally, within 30 days of receipt of the request. Once the request has been considered and approved by the doctor, you will be required to make an appointment with your preferred doctor.

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 Office Manager PO Box 686 Hamilton 2303 or office@hamiltondoctors.com.au

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.

The Office Manager
P O Box 686
Hamilton NSW 2303
Email: office@hamiltondoctors.com.au

If the complaint remains unresolved, then an individual can contact:
NSW Health Care Complaints Commission
Locked Mail Bag 18, STAWBERRY HILLS NSW 2012
Phone: 1800 043 159

Privacy and our website

Our website <https://www.hamiltondoctors.com.au> is available for your convenience. You may contact us through our website via e-mail.

Due to privacy and security regulations, communication via email is not preferred. No password or encryption creates a risk that your e-mail may be intercepted, and read, by a third party.

We will not be sending any private health information to you in this way without your express written and documented consent, within your health records. By providing us with written consent you are accepting any and all risks associated with communicating via email.

Please note: We do not provide medical advice via e-mail and our website is general advice only. Please see your doctor for any medical advice required.

Policy review statement

This privacy policy will be reviewed annually and when required to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur and will be updated via our website. We will advise our patients via our website, or notifications within the practice. Printed hard copies are also available upon request

When this policy is reviewed updates are required on Hamilton Doctors website and facebook pages, the policy and procedure manual and for patient handout.