

Southbank Medical Clinic Privacy Policy

Current as of: January 2022

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. If you wish to not disclose your personal details to us when requested, this may limit our ability to provide you with a comprehensive health service in a timely and appropriate manner. We encourage you to discuss your concerns with our practice staff prior to your first consultation or with your doctor.

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. Our practice also participates in My Health Record where a shared health summary or an event summary may be accessed to collect health information such as a previous immunisation record.
3. We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email or SMS, telephone us or make an online appointment. Our practice does not have a social media presence and therefore does not communicate via any of the social medial platforms.
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 through the My Health Record system which our clinic participates in.

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 use your health information for quality improvement, education and continuing professional development. Our practice uses a software tool that assists us in finding health issues and trends among patients. This is part of a quality improvement initiative where your information is de-identified (so you cannot be identified) and grouped together and securely passed on to our local Primary Health Network to assist with improving population health outcomes. All data is securely stored within Australia. If you would like not to have your de-identified health information shared then please tell our practice manager and they will arrange for your de-identified health information to be removed from the grouped data.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms including some paper records such as payment receipts, imaging films etc.. Majority of your personal information is held in electronic format.

Our practice stores all personal information securely and this is done by:

- Securing our premises
- Placing passwords and varying access levels on databases to limit access and protect electronic information from unauthorised interference, access, modification and disclosure; and
- providing locked cabinets and rooms for the storage of physical records.

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 to our practice manager by filling out and signing the “request to access personal health information form” and our practice will respond within 30 business days of receiving the written request. There may be a small fee for the retrieval of your records.

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 our practice manager.

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 also have the option of making the initial contact by phoning our practice on 03 9645 7775 and ask to speak to our practice manager. You may also express your privacy concerns in writing which you can direct to our Practice Manager, Southbank Medical Clinic, 151 Sturt Street, Southbank 3006, Victoria. We will then attempt to provide a response within 30 days of receipt.

You may also contact the:

- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (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.
- Health Complaints Commissioner. For further information visit <https://hcc.vic.gov.au/> or call 1300 582 113.



Privacy and our website

We collect no personal information about you when you visit our website unless you choose to provide this information to us, for example, when you fill out the new patient registration form online. However, certain information about site visitors is automatically collected and stored. Our practice website also contains links to other third party websites that are not owned or controlled by us. These links are provided for your convenience only. Please be aware that Southbank Medical Clinic is not responsible for the privacy practices of any linked sites.

Policy review statement

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains applicable to current practice procedure and legal requirements.

Contact

Please direct any queries, complaints, requests for access to medical records to:

Practice Manager at Southbank Medical Clinic

151 Sturt Street, Southbank 3006

Phone: 03 9645 7775 Or Email: manager@southbankmedicalclinic.com.au