

Patient's Privacy Policy

Introduction

This policy is to provide information to you, the patient, on how your personal and health information is collected and used at The Doctors at Lavington and Thurgoona.

1: Who can you contact about this policy?

For enquiries regarding this policy, you can contact our Business Manager Jenny Shipard on 02 6057 7100 or jshipard@thedoctors.net.au

If you would like to make a complaint, please see section 14 of this document.

2: When and why is your consent necessary?

When you register as a patient of this practice, you provide consent for the GPs and practice staff to access and use your personal information to facilitate the delivery of healthcare. Access to your personal information is restricted only to the doctors and specific practice staff who require it for your care. If we ever use your personal information for purposes other than healthcare provision, we will obtain additional consent from you.

The Doctors at Lavington and Thurgoona will always seek your informed consent should real-time audio/visual recording, duplication and storage of a consultation, including those via telehealth and those conducted remotely occur.

It is important to us that as the patient, you understand why we collect and use your personal information.

3: What is a patient health record and why do we collect, use, store and share your personal information?

A patient health record is information collected about a patient for the purpose of treating a patient.

The practice collects, uses, stores, and shares your personal information primarily to manage your health safely and effectively. This includes providing healthcare services, managing medical records, and ensuring accurate billing and payments. Additionally, we may utilise your information for internal quality and safety improvement processes such as practice audits, accreditation purposes, and staff training to maintain high-quality service standards.

4: What personal information is collected?

The information we will collect about you includes your:

- names, date of birth, addresses, contact details
- medical information including medical history, medicines, allergies, and adverse reactions immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors
- Medicare number (where available) for identification and claiming purposes

- healthcare identifier numbers
- health fund details.

5: Dealing with us anonymously

You can 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.

6: How do we collect your personal information

When you make your first appointment, the practice staff and your GP will collect your personal and demographic information via your registration.

We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email or SMS, telephone us, make an online appointment, or communicate with us using social media.

In some circumstances, personal information may also be collected from other sources, including:

- 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 (if relevant).
- While providing medical services, further personal information may be collected via:
 - electronic prescribing
 - My Health Record
 - online appointments.

Various types of images may be collected and used, including:

- **CCTV footage:** Collected from our premises for security and safety purpose
- **Photos and medical images:** These can be taken using personal devices for medical purposes, following the guidelines outlined in our guide on using personal devices for medical images.

7: When, why and who do we share your personal information?

We sometimes share your personal information:

- with third parties 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 (e.g. In referral letters)
- when it is required or authorised by law (e.g. 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 it is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (e.g. some diseases require mandatory notification)
- When it is provision of medical services, through electronic prescribing, My Health Record (e.g. via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).

Only people who need to access your personal information will be able to do so. Other than providing medical services or as otherwise described in this policy, the practice will not share personal information with any third party without your consent.

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

8: Will your information be used for marketing purposes?

The practice will not use your personal information for marketing any goods or services directly to you without your expressed consent. If you do consent, you may opt out of direct marketing at any time by notifying the practice in writing.

9: How do we use your information to improve services?

The practice may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services offered to patients through research, analysis of patient data for quality improvement and for training activities with the practice team

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 reception staff know if you do not want your information included.

10: How are document automation services used?

Document automation is where systems use existing data to generate electronic documents relating to medical conditions and healthcare.

The practice uses document automation technologies to create documents such as referrals, which are sent to other healthcare providers. These documents contain only your relevant medical information.

These document automation technologies are used through secure medical software, Best Practice.

All users of the medical software have their own unique user credentials and password and can only access information that is relevant to their role in the practice team.

The practice complies with the Australian privacy legislation and APPs to protect your information.

All data, both electronic and paper are stored and managed in accordance with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners [Privacy and managing health information guidance](#).

11: How are Artificial Intelligence (AI) Scribes used?

The practice uses an AI scribe tool to support GPs take notes during their consultations with you. The AI scribe uses an audio recording of your consultation to generate a clinical note for your health record. The practice AI scribe service is Lyrebird Scribe.

Lyrebird Scribe:

- Does not share information outside of Australia
- Destroys the audio file once the transcription is complete.
- Removes sensitive, personal identifying information as part of the transcription

The practice will only use data from our digital scribe service to provide healthcare to you.

12: How is your personal information stored and protected?

Your personal information may be stored in various forms.

The practice stores all personal information securely.

If you would like further detailed information on the storage and protection you can contact us for a full copy of our storage policy.

13: How can you access and correct your personal information at the practice?

You have the right to request access to, and correction of, your personal information.

The practice acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records.

The practice will respond to any requests to access or correct your personal information within 24-48 hours. Access to your record may take longer to this depending on whether your record is entirely electronic or if there may be paper components to your record.

The practice will take reasonable steps to correct your personal information where the information is not accurate or up to date. Sometimes, we will ask you to verify your personal information held by the practice is correct and current. You may request we correct or update your information. To do this please contact 02 6057 7100.

14: How can you lodge a privacy-related complaint, and how will the complaint be handled?

We take complaints and concerns regarding privacy seriously. You should express any privacy concerns you may have. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with the resolution procedure.

If you do not feel we have resolved your issue You may also contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner. The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner will require you to give them time to respond before they investigate. For further information visit www.oaic.gov.au or call the OAIC (Office of the Australian Information Commissioner) on 1300 363 992.

Policy review statement

This policy is current as at 25/02/2025.

The privacy policy is regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with current obligations.

If any changes are made:

- They will be reflected on the website.
- Significant changes may be communicated directly to patients via email or other means.

Please check the policy periodically for updates. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us.