

This practice has developed a policy to protect patient privacy in compliance with Australia's privacy legislation.

## Newtown Medical Centre 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:

- 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 will collect your personal information:

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 may be collected through Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions (eRX,) or through the MyHealth Record system via a shared health summary or event summary. Safescript is also utilised within this practice.
3. 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.
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 Veteran's Affairs (as necessary).

### **Who do we share your personal information with?**

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 Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions (eRX), MyHealth Record (eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary). Safescript is also utilised within this practice.

Only people that 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 as paper records, electronic records or in a visual format such as photos relevant to health treatment for example skin lesions.

Our practice stores all personal information securely. All electronic information is stored in protected information systems and any hard copy information is stored in a secure environment and only accessible to authorised persons. All staff and contractors sign confidentiality agreements and understand their obligations in relations to information privacy, confidentiality and security.

### **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 prefer you to put this request in writing but if this is not possible you may make this request verbally and fill out the Request for Personal Health Information form. We shall acknowledge this request within 7 days and respond within 30 days. There is no fee for this request but fees may be charged for the printing of medical records from our electronic system. 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 your personal information held by our practice is correct and up-to-date. You may also request that we correct or update your information, and you should make such requests in writing to [manager@newtownmc.com](mailto:manager@newtownmc.com)

## 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.

Please forward any privacy related complaints to:

The Manager

Newtown Medical Centre

309-311 Pakington Street

Newtown Vic 3220

Phone: 03 521 5044

Email: [manager@newtownmc.com.au](mailto:manager@newtownmc.com.au)

We will acknowledge your complaint within 7 days and respond 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](http://www.oaic.gov.au) or call the OAIC on 1300 336 002.

## Privacy and our website

### Website Security

We endeavour to ensure our website is as secure as possible; however, users need to be aware that the World Wide Web is not a secure medium. Newtown Medical Centre takes no liability for any interference or damage to a user's computer system, software or data occurring in connection with this website. We strongly recommend user's take appropriate measures to ensure their computer is protected against third party interference whilst on the web.

### External links to other websites

This site may contain links to external websites which Newtown Medical Centre has added to improve the service we offer and expand upon the information readily available to you. Once a user decides to click on a link and navigate away from the Newtown Medical Centre website the privacy policy noted here is no longer in effect. Users are recommended to familiarise themselves with the privacy policies on these websites once they browse and interact with them.

Recommendations or views purported on these websites are not necessarily reflective of those of Newtown Medical Centre.

### Website Privacy Policy Statement

We do not collect or use any personal information on visitors to our website, through the use of "cookies" or other software or hardware techniques. We use Google Analytics to track website hits and other information when you access our website such as pages viewed, date and time visited etc. This information is used for statistical and website development purposes only. If you use our online contact form your contact details will be used for us to contact you in return.

Secure transmissions are not supported and if personal information is transmitted to the Practice via our email or our online contact form the practice cannot guarantee security of these transactions.

### Policy review statement

This privacy policy will be reviewed annually and any legislative changes will be updated as they occur. Any amendments to this policy will be notified to patients via notices in the waiting room and on our website.