

Patient Privacy

Here we explain how personal information about you and your health is recorded and managed in our practice. We also have a written privacy policy describing how we manage personal information. You can receive a copy of our policy free of charge upon request.

Personal information

Balmoral Medical Practice securely records information about your health. The personal information we collect includes your name, date of birth, address(es), contact details, Medicare number, healthcare identifiers, emergency contact details and next of kin information. Medical information may include your medical history, current health concerns and any care you may require. Your GP needs information about your past and present health to provide you with safe, effective and high-quality healthcare.

Our practice follows the guidelines of the RACGP's *Handbook for the Management of Health Information in General Practice* (5th edition). The Handbook incorporates federal and state privacy legislation and the Australian Privacy Principles, which require that your personal information is kept private and secure.

Your medical records

This practice takes steps to ensure that your medical records:

- are accurate, complete, well organised and legible
- are kept up to date
- contain sufficient information to enable another GP to care for you if required
- include an appropriate summary of your care
- can be used, with your consent, to remind you about follow-up appointments, health checks and preventive care.

If you are unsure why information is being requested, please ask your GP or practice staff.

If you wish to remain anonymous while accessing healthcare services, please discuss this with practice staff.

Providing your information to other GPs

Within our practice, it is normal for GPs involved in your care to have access to your medical record. If you have concerns about this, please discuss them with your GP or practice staff.

It is important that other healthcare providers involved in your care, such as medical specialists, allied health professionals and hospitals, receive relevant information about your medical history to provide you with the best possible care. Your GP will advise you when this is necessary.

Providing your information to others

Your GP respects your right to decide how your personal information is used and shared. Personal information that identifies you will only be disclosed with your consent unless an exception applies under Australian law.

Our practice will not share your personal health information with another person or organisation unless:

- you have consented to the disclosure
- we are legally required to disclose the information
- the information is required to process Medicare or private health insurance claims
- disclosure is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to public health or safety.

Where disclosure is required, only the minimum necessary information will be provided.

Your health information will not ordinarily be sent overseas unless:

- you have been informed and consent to the disclosure; and
- appropriate privacy protections are in place, consistent with Australian Privacy Principles.

Using health information for quality improvement and research

Our practice may use patient health information to review and improve the quality of care provided.

We may also use de-identified information for quality improvement activities, education and approved research projects. This information does not identify individual patients and is managed in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles.

Where legislation permits identifiable information to be used for research without consent, your GP will discuss this with you where appropriate.

If you have any questions or wish to opt out of quality improvement activities involving de-identified information, please speak with your GP or reception staff.

Security of information

Australian privacy legislation applies to all personal health information held in electronic and paper records. Our practice takes reasonable steps to protect your information from unauthorised access, misuse, loss, interference, modification or disclosure through physical, electronic and administrative safeguards.

Access to your health information

You may request access to your medical record or other personal information held by the practice.

Your GP will consider whether providing access could pose a serious risk to your health or safety or the privacy of another individual. Where necessary, information relating to another person may be removed before access is provided.

Your GP can explain the information contained within your health record.

Depending on the nature of your request, an administrative fee may apply.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

To support accurate and efficient clinical documentation, our practice may use secure Artificial Intelligence (AI)-assisted transcription technology during your consultation.

Before AI-assisted transcription is used, your doctor will seek your consent at each consultation. Participation is entirely voluntary, and choosing not to use this technology will not affect the care you receive.

Where AI transcription is used:

- conversations are transcribed using a secure service hosted in Australia where practicable
- information is handled in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles
- your treating doctor reviews, edits and approves all clinical notes before they become part of your medical record
- AI tools assist with documentation only and do not make clinical decisions or replace your doctor's professional judgement
- access to transcription data is strictly controlled and limited to authorised personnel and service providers who are bound by privacy and confidentiality obligations
- your information is not used to train publicly available AI models without your explicit consent.

If you have any questions about our use of AI-assisted documentation or would prefer not to have it used during your consultation, please let your doctor or reception staff know.

Direct marketing

This practice does not engage in direct marketing.

Resolving concerns regarding the privacy of your health information

If you have concerns about the privacy or accuracy of your personal information, please speak with practice staff. Incorrect information can be corrected or your concerns recorded in your file. For legal reasons, the original clinical record must be retained.

Contacts

If you have questions or wish to make a complaint about the privacy of your personal information, please ask to speak with the Practice Privacy Officer.

Further information is available from:

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

1300 363 992

www.oaic.gov.au

ACT Health Services Commissioner

02 6205 2222

www.hrc.act.gov.au/health

Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (WA)

1800 813 583

www.hadsco.wa.gov.au

Information and Privacy Commission NSW

1800 472 679

www.ipc.nsw.gov.au

Office of the Health Complaints Commissioner (Victoria)

1300 582 113

www.hcc.vic.gov.au

Northern Territory Information Commissioner

1800 005 610

infocomm.nt.gov.au

Office of the Information Commissioner Queensland

07 3234 7373

www.oic.qld.gov.au

Tasmanian Ombudsman

1800 001 170

www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au

Privacy Committee of South Australia

08 8204 8786

www.archives.sa.gov.au