

Northwest Health Medical Centre Privacy Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline how Northwest Health Medical Centre complies with its confidentiality and privacy obligations. As an organization, principal concern is and always will be the health of our patients.

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 at Northwest Health Medical Centre, 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. All staff are required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Why do we collect, use, hold and share your personal information?

Northwest Health Medical Centre 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 (e.g 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, ethnicity, occupation, adverse events, immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors
- Medicare number (where available) for identification and claiming purposes
- healthcare identifiers
- health fund details.
- Next of Kin/Emergency Contact

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 authorized by law to only deal with identified individuals.

How do we collect your personal information?

Northwest Health Medical Centre 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. Northwest Health Medical centre currently uses My Health Record.
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. All information received via email, SMS or from a third party will be uploaded into your health records.

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).
 - Via online Health booking system. Hot Doc

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 eTP, My Health Record (eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary). Northwest Health Medical Centre use My Health record.
- 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.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms. Northwest Health Medical Centre use the following methods to store information. Paper records, electronic records, visual records (x-rays, CT scans, videos and photos and audio recordings)

Northwest Health Medical Centre stores all personal information securely. Your personal records are held in electronic format, in protected information systems, and hard copy format in a secure environment. All Staff sign a confidentiality agreement and use passwords for entering into systems as 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 require you to put this request in writing. Northwest Health Medical Centre will ask you to sign a consent form allowing us to transfer any medical records. Once the consent form is received by the practice, we will endeavor to copy your records within one month. We will advise the patient if there is a cost involved for transferring the information.

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 Reception at info@nwhmc.com.au. Or inform reception when you come for the next appointment.

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.

All complaints can be sent via Email to info@nwhmc.com.au or in writing to Northwest Health Medical Centre, **G09/2-4, Aberdour Avenue, Rouse Hill**. You can also contact the Practice Manager on **02 9128 3456**. We will Endeavor to answer your query within one – two weeks.

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 or call the **OAIC on 1300 363 992**.

Privacy and our website

Northwest Health Medical Centre website contains links to other sites. Please be aware that Northwest Health Medical Centre is not responsible for the privacy practices of any linked sites. We encourage users who leave our site to read the privacy statements of each and every linked website that they choose to visit. All links to external sites is provided for your convenience. The information, products and advertisements contained in the linked sites are neither approved or endorsed by Northwest Health Medical Centre, and Northwest Health Medical Centre is not responsible for such information, products or advertisements.

- Your privacy is important to us and we want you to feel comfortable visiting our website.
- Any personal information that patients have given to us, including email addresses, will be used only in the following ways:
 - Personal data will be securely stored.
 - We will not provide your personal data to any third party without your permission.
 - We do not automatically collect your personal email address, when you visit our website site. It is provided on the registration form or by the patient.
 - If we join with a third party to provide services and you sign up for those services, we will share your name and other contact details, necessary with our partner to provide those services to you.
 - If you view specific pages or download information from specific pages on our website, we will track and add the number of your visits to the aggregate number of visits by all users in order to better design our website.
- We may share aggregate demographic information with our affiliates. This is not linked to any personal information that can identify you or any other visitor to our website at <https://nwhmc.com.au/>

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Northwest Health Medical Centre may support the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies by medical practitioners to assist with clinical documentation and practice operations, including the recording, transcription, or summarisation of consultations.

Where AI tools are used, this is done in accordance with professional standards, ethical obligations, and applicable Australian privacy legislation. Medical practitioners remain responsible for clinical decision-making and for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the medical record.

The practice takes reasonable steps to ensure that any AI systems used manage personal and sensitive health information securely and appropriately, including compliance with privacy and data-handling requirements. Patient information is used solely for the purpose of providing healthcare services, unless otherwise permitted or required by law.

The use of AI during or in connection with a consultation occurs with the patient's knowledge and consent. If consent is not provided, alternative documentation methods will be used.

Patients may raise any questions or concerns regarding the use of AI with their treating healthcare practitioner.

Policy review statement

Northwest Health Medical Centre has the right to change the Privacy Policy at any time. If there are updates to Northwest Health Medical Centre Privacy policy, we will address the changes promptly and update the revision date of this document.

Disclaimer

The *Privacy policy template for general practices* is intended for use as a guide of a general nature only and may or may not be relevant to particular practices or circumstances. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) has used its best endeavors to ensure the template is adapted for general practice to address current and anticipated future privacy requirements. Persons adopting or implementing its procedures or recommendations should exercise their own independent skill or judgement or seek appropriate professional advice. While the template is directed to general practice, it does not ensure compliance with any privacy laws, and cannot of itself guarantee discharge of the duty of care owed to patients. Accordingly, the RACGP disclaims all liability (including negligence) to any users of the information contained in this template for any loss or damage (consequential or otherwise), cost or expense incurred or arising by reason of reliance on the template in any manner.

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