

1. Introduction

Our practice is committed to best practices concerning managing the information we collect. This practice has developed a policy to protect patient privacy in compliance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) ('the Privacy Act'). Our policy is to inform you of the following:

- the kinds of information that we collect and hold, which, as a medical practice, is likely to be 'health information' for the purposes of the Privacy Act.
- how we collect and hold personal information.
- the purposes for which we collect, hold, use, and disclose personal information.
- how you may access your personal information and seek the correction of that information.
- how you may complain about a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles and how we will deal with such a complaint.
- whether we are likely to disclose personal information to overseas recipients.

2. What kinds of personal information do we collect?

The type of information we may collect and hold includes:

- Your name, address, date of birth, email and contact details
- Medicare number, DVA number and other government identifiers, although we will not use these for the purposes of identifying you in our practice
- Other health information about you, including:
 - notes of your symptoms or diagnosis and the treatment given to you
 - your specialist reports and test results
 - your appointment and billing details
 - your prescriptions and other pharmaceutical purchases
 - your dental records
 - your genetic information
 - your healthcare identifier
 - any other information about your race, sexuality, or religion when collected by a health service provider.

3. How do we collect and hold personal information?

We will generally collect personal information:

- from you directly when you provide your details to us. This might be via a face-to-face discussion, telephone conversation, registration form or online form
- from a person responsible for you

- from third parties where the Privacy Act or other law allows it - this may include, but is not limited to: other members of your treating team, diagnostic centres, specialists, hospitals, the My Health Record system¹, electronic prescription services, Medicare, your health insurer, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

4. Why do we collect, hold, use, and disclose personal information?

In general, we collect, hold, use, and disclose your personal information for the following purposes:

- to provide health services to you
- to communicate with you concerning the health service being provided to you
- to comply with our legal obligations, including, but not limited to, mandatory notification of communicable diseases or mandatory reporting under applicable child protection legislation.
- to help us manage our accounts and administrative services, including billing, arrangements with health funds, pursuing unpaid invoices, management of our ITC systems
- for consultations with other doctors and allied health professionals involved in your healthcare.
- to obtain, analyse and discuss test results from diagnostic and pathology laboratories
- for identification and insurance claiming
- If you have a My Health Record, to upload your personal information to and download your personal information from the My Health Record system.
- Information can also be disclosed through an electronic transfer of prescriptions service.
- To liaise with your health fund, government, and regulatory bodies such as Medicare, the Department of Veteran's Affairs, and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) (if you make a privacy complaint to the OAIC), as necessary.

5. How can you access and correct your personal information?

You have a right to seek access to and correction of the personal information which we hold about you. Note: an administration fee may apply to such a request. In this case, you will be notified of the cost before the request is completed.

For details on accessing and correcting your health record, please get in touch with our practice as noted below under Contact Details.

We will typically respond to your request within 30 days.

6. How do we hold your personal information?

¹ See: <https://myhealthrecord.gov.au/internet/mhr/publishing.nsf/content/home>

Our staff are trained and required to respect and protect your privacy. We take reasonable steps to protect information from misuse and loss and unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure. This includes:

- Holding your information on an encrypted database
- Holding your information in secure cloud storage
- Our staff sign and are bound by confidentiality agreements
- All computer hardware and software passwords are kept confidential
- A designated staff member is responsible for the practice's electronic systems, computer security, and adherence to protocols in accordance with RACGP's *Computer and information security standards (CISS)* (2nd edition)
- Personal health information is kept out of view and unable to be accessed by the public.
- Staff training is renewed on an annual basis.
- If hard copies of documentation need to be discarded, the practice uses appropriate and secure methods of destruction

7. Privacy-related questions and complaints

Suppose you have any questions about privacy-related issues or wish to complain about a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles or the handling of your personal information by us. In that case, you may lodge your complaint in writing (see below for details). We will typically respond to your request within 30 days.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you may refer the matter to the OAIC:

Phone: 1300 363 992

Email: enquiries@oaic.gov.au

Fax: +61 2 9284 9666

Post: GPO Box 5218

Sydney NSW 2001

Website: <https://www.oaic.gov.au/individuals/how-do-i-make-a-privacy-complaint>

8. Anonymity and pseudonyms

The Privacy Act provides that individuals must have the option of not identifying themselves or using a pseudonym when dealing with our practice, except in certain circumstances, such as where it is impracticable for us to deal with you if you have not identified yourself.

Milton Village Medical believes that it is largely impracticable to deal with patients anonymously or via a pseudonym in medical practices. The provision of medical services is likely to be impacted, and billing via Medicare or a health insurer, where applicable, is likely to be impracticable. Of course, in some instances, patients seeking specific treatments may be prepared to forego notifying their insurer or seek a Medicare benefit and pay the practice directly if they wish.

9. Overseas disclosure.

We may disclose your personal information to the following overseas recipients:

- any practice or individual who assists us in providing services (such as where you have come from overseas and had your health record transferred from overseas or have

treatment continuing from an overseas provider). In this case, the patient's permission for the disclosure must be received.

- anyone else to whom you authorise us to disclose it

10. Updates to this Policy

This Policy will be reviewed from time to time to take account of new laws and technology, changes to our operations and other necessary developments. Updates will be publicised on the practice's website.

11. Privacy and websites

This policy will be made available on the practice's website at www.miltonvillagemedical.com.au.

Additionally, Milton Village Medical allows patients to communicate by email for non-urgent matters. Patients must read and agree with the email communication consent form to enable this. This form provides information about email risks and guidelines for email communication. Please remember that no one can diagnose your condition from email or other written communications, and communication via electronic means cannot replace your relationship with a doctor or another healthcare practitioner.

RISKS

Communication by e-mail has several risks, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- o E-mail can be circulated, forwarded, and stored in paper and electronic files.
- o Backup copies of e-mail may exist even after the sender or the recipient has deleted their copy.
- o Unintended recipients can receive E-mail.
- o E-mail can be intercepted, altered, forwarded, or used without authorisation or detection.
- o E-mail can be used to introduce viruses into computer systems.

Patients should not communicate with Milton Village Medical via email if any of the above risks concern them.

GUIDELINES FOR EMAIL COMMUNICATION

- o Include the general topic of your message in the subject line of the e-mail (e.g., appointment).
- o Include your name, date of birth, and phone number
- o The content of the email should only be used for non-sensitive and non-urgent issues.
- o Your Healthcare Practitioner may still require you to schedule an appointment to discuss the subject of your email.
- o The email message should not be time sensitive. Milton Village Medical endeavours to read and respond within 72 hours to any e-mail. However, we cannot guarantee that any email will be responded to within a particular timeframe.
- o Office staff may receive and read your email

Inform Milton Village Medical of changes in your email address and contact details.

12. Contact details for privacy-related issues

Practice Manager: Casey-lee Grant

Email: admin@mvmmedical.com.au

Phone: 0733670333