

NOTICE TO ALL PATIENTS REGARDING THE PRIVACY OF YOUR MEDICAL RECORDS
WARATAH GENERAL PRACTICE

This practice is committed to providing quality health care for its patients. As a fundamental part of this commitment, doctors and staff of the practice recognise the importance of ensuring that our patients are fully informed and involved with their health care.

This practice, as a health provider in the Private Sector, is bound by the Australian Privacy Principles. The principles set the standards by which we handle personal information collected from our patients.

As a part of our commitment to providing quality health care it is necessary for us to maintain files pertaining to patient health. The files contain the following types of information:

- Personal details (name, address, date of birth, Medicare number)
- Patient medical history
- Notes made during the course of medical consultations
- Referrals to other health service providers
- Results and reports received from other health service providers
- Healthcare identifiers

This practice will take reasonable steps to ensure that patient personal information is accurate, complete, up to date and relevant. For this purpose, our staff will ask patients to confirm that their contact details are correct when they attend a consultation. We request that patients let us know if any of the information we hold about them is incorrect.

You have a right to deal with us anonymously or under a pseudonym unless it is impracticable for us to do this or unless we are required or authorised by law to only deal with identified individuals. You must discuss this with a Practitioner.

The information held about the patient is provided by the patient or arises as a consequence of information provided by the patient. We collect information in various ways such as over the phone or in writing, in person at our clinic. This information may be collected by medical and non-medical staff.

- 1) Practice staff collect patients personal and demographic information via registration when patients present to the Practice for the first time. Patients are encouraged to pay attention to the collection statement about the management of collected information and patient privacy.
- 2) During the course of providing medical services, the Practice healthcare practitioners will collect further personal information
- 3) Information may also be obtained from My Health Record if you participate in this program
- 4) Personal information may also be collected from the patient's guardian or responsible person or from any other involved healthcare specialists.
- 5) In emergency situations we may also need to collect information from patient's relatives or friends.

The practice is required by law to retain medical records for certain periods of time depending on patient age at the time we provide the services.

A patient's personal information may be held at the Practice in various forms:

- As paper records
- As electronic records
- At visual – xrays CT scans, photos
- As audio recordings

Corrections – If the patient believes that the information we have about them is not accurate, complete or up to date, we ask that patients to contact us in writing. The request will be assessed by Dr Sonia Nightingale who will then respond to the patient.

Patient medical file is handled with the utmost respect for patient privacy. The file will be accessed by a medical practitioner, and when necessary (for example in the absence of patient's usual medical practitioner) by other practitioners in the practice. It may also be necessary for our staff to handle the patient file from time to time to address the administrative requirements of running a medical practice. Practice staff are bound by strict confidentiality requirements as a condition of employment with Waratah General Practice and all staff have signed confidentiality contracts.

Ordinarily the practice will not release the contents of a patient medical file without patient consent. However we advise that there may be occasions where we will be required to release the details of the patient file irrespective of whether the patient consent to disclosure of the information is given. This will occur where the law requires disclosure, such as pursuant to a subpoena, court order, request from Police and government regulatory bodies.

The practice will not disclose personal information to any third party other than in the course of providing medical services, without full disclosure to the patient, the reason for the information transfer and full consent from the patient. The Practice will not use any personal information in relation to direct marketing to the patient without that patient's express consent. Patients may opt-out of direct marketing at any time by notifying the Practice in writing.

The practice will not disclose personal information to anyone outside Australia without need and without patient consent.

Our practice may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services we offer to our patients through research and analysis of our patient data.

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

We advise that a patient of this practice has rights of access to any information we hold concerning them. Should the patient wish to access this information we refer the patient to our handout entitled **"ACCESSING YOUR MEDICAL RECORD"**.

As part of the practice commitment to preserving the confidentiality of the information contained in the patient medical record, we advise that strict secure storage policies are

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observed in this practice. Patient electronic records are accessible only by staff of this practice and are protected by a security password.

Patient paper records are kept in a secure storeroom and are accessible only by practice staff. The storeroom has a security lock with a code required to access.

Should the patient at any time have a query or complaint in relation to the privacy policies in place, they will be advised to contact Dr Sonia Nightingale, who will be happy to address any concerns that the patient may have. It is preferable that any complaints are made in writing, addressed to the above named person and marked private and confidential. A reply will be made in accordance with the practice complaints handling procedure. If the patient is dissatisfied with our handling of the complaint or outcome, the patient may make an application to the Australian Information Commissioner or Privacy Commissioner in your State.

Our practice Website is for information only and we do not collect patient information on this site.

Thank you.
Waratah General Practice