



## **(1) 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.

## **(2) Why and when your consent is necessary**

When you register as a patient of our practice, you provide consent for our GP's and necessary 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.

### *Making contact with your family members*

It may not be convenient, but the Privacy Law is clear, we are not legally permitted to contact a family member on your behalf, answer questions raised by a family member or give information about you to a family member if you are over 16 years (unless exceptional circumstances prevail where harm etc may be imminent). The only time this information will be given to someone other than the patient is if the patient gives verbal consent at the time.

### *Enduring Guardian*

If you are caring for a family member, our legal obligation to adhere to the Privacy Law is set aside (where deemed necessary by the treating GP) if you are the patient's Enduring Guardian. We require a copy of this document to be supplied to us. This enables reception to discuss appointments etc and clinicians to discuss medical treatment/issues (where deemed necessary by the treating GP). Without it, we reserve the right to withhold patient information.

## **(3) Why 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, practice audits, accreditation and business processes (e.g. staff training).

## **(4) Telehealth consultations and your personal information**

The pandemic made it necessary to offer an alternative option to face to face consultations. EFP chose GP Consults as the 3<sup>rd</sup> party service. The only information we make available to this 3<sup>rd</sup> party is your mobile number. This number and the video data is not stored. GP Consults is hosted in the Amazon web services (AWS) Sydney data centre. All cloud computing services comply with Australian Cyber Security Centre Requirements and, at no stage does any data go overseas. You can read GP Consult full privacy policy at: <https://gpconsults.com.au/consults/resources/Privacy%20Policy.pdf>

## **(5) What personal information do we collect?**

The information we collect about you includes:

- Names, date of birth, addresses, next of kin and emergency contacts
- Medical information including medical history, medications, allergies, adverse events, immunisations, social and family history and risk factors
- Healthcare identifiers for communicating with your My Health Record
- Land line and mobile phone numbers (we will ask for your explicit consent to communicate with you using SMS)
- Email address: We ask for your email address as a form of contact and will use this when necessary. However, where possible, we will ask that you email us first so that we may directly return email for added security. You will need to include 3 points of identification in the email e.g. name, address and date of birth and the request you are making. We also have the availability to email some information to you directly from your patient file. This email is encrypted and will require a pin. The pin will be supplied to you at the time of the email.

## **(6) Dealing with us anonymously**

Wherever it is lawful and practicable patients may seek to obtain our services anonymously. There may be circumstances where providing healthcare services anonymously may not be possible. If a patient requests this service they will be directed to speak with the Practice Manager prior to accessing healthcare in our clinic.

## **(7) How 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 "New patient registration form".
2. During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information
3. We participate in the My Health Record system. You may ask for information to be supplied regarding this Government service. You may request the GP upload a shared health summary (SHS) to your My Health Record account, at the time of your consultation.
4. 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 electronic or social media.
5. 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 carer
  - Other healthcare providers involved in your care such as specialists, allied health professionals, hospitals, community health services, pathology and diagnostic imaging
  - Medicare or the Department of Veteran's Affairs

## **(8) Who 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 Australian Privacy Principles and this policy
- With other healthcare providers
- When it is required or authorised by law (e.g. court subpoena)
- When it is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to a patient's life, health or safety, public health or safety or it is impracticable 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 processes
- When there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (e.g. some diseases require mandatory notification)
- During the course of providing medical services, through electronic transfer of prescriptions and my health record system (e.g. sending a script, shared health summary or event summary)

Only people with the allocated level of permission will be able to access your information. 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. At registration you will be asked to participate in our reminder system. This is a service we supply in the interest of your health and you may choose to opt-out of this service at any time by way of a brief letter stating your wish to be removed from the reminder system. If you do not consent, you may opt-out of direct marketing or our reminder system at any time by notifying our practice in writing.

## **(9) How we store and protect your personal information?**

Your personal information and patient file are kept in electronic format only.

Your personal information is stored on site in our medical software. It is also stored offsite on a secure data server in Sydney under encryption. Upon retrieval (if needed) this information is in encryption format. This system is compliant with the Computer Information Security Standards set by our professional body (RACGP CISS) in line with the Privacy Act. These standards include virus protection, firewall software, individual passwords, regular backup that is tested daily, safe storage of electronic equipment, destruction of devices and supporting policies and procedures that are known to all team members. All team members with access to information including IT providers have signed confidentiality statements and are trained in protecting your information.

**(10) 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 this request to be in writing directed to Confidential - The Practice Manager at the practice address or by emailing the Practice Manager [tania@edgeworthfp.com.au](mailto:tania@edgeworthfp.com.au) stating Confidential - The Practice Manager in the subject line. You will receive a response to your request within 14 days.

There may be a fee attached for the administration of your records and the Doctors time required to comply with your request.

Our practice will take all reasonable steps to correct your personal information where the information is not accurate or up to date. We will ask you to verify 3 forms of identification each time you attend our practice. This is to uphold privacy policies and to confirm we have your current information.

**(11) How can you lodge a privacy related concern? How will the concern be handled at our practice?**

We take all patient concerns regarding privacy seriously. You should express any breach of privacy concerns you may have in writing directed to Confidential - The Practice Manager at the practice address, drop it into the surgery or you may choose to email it to [tania@edgeworthfp.com.au](mailto:tania@edgeworthfp.com.au) stating Confidential - The Practice Manager in the subject line. We will then attempt to resolve the concern within 10 working days in accordance with our resolution procedure. This will involve making the specific staff member/s aware of the complaint and/or alleged privacy breach. A notated meeting will be held, then the patient will be contacted by the Practice Manager with the outcome. You may also contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). For further information visit [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au) or call them on 1300 336 002.

**(13) Policy review statement**

This privacy policy is reviewed annually or when there are specific changes that may affect our patients. Whenever we amend this policy the new document will be available on our website and via reception