

# Hamilton Medical Centre - Privacy Policy

## 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.

## Why and when your consent is necessary

When you register as a patient of our practice, 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.

## Why do 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 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, adverse events, immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors
- Medicare number (where available) for identification and claiming purposes
- healthcare identifiers
- health fund details.

## 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 authorised by law to only deal with identified individuals.

## How do we collect your personal information?

Our practice 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. Information can also be collected through My Health Record, e.g. via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary.
3. We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email, telephone us, make an online appointment or communicate with us using social media.
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).

## 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 (e.g. specialists, hospitals)
- when it is required or authorised by law (e.g. 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 (e.g. some diseases require mandatory notification)
- during the course of providing medical services, through My Health Record (e.g. via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).

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. These include: electronic records and visual records (X-rays, CT scans, videos and photos).

Our practice stores all personal information securely. All personal information is stored in electronic format and is securely encrypted so that it can only be read by medical software. Personal information is protected with a user log in and password for all staff members only. Upon employment, all staff members and contractors sign a confidentiality agreement which applies even if a staff member leaves the practice.

#### **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 using our Request for Medical Information by Patient Form, and our practice will respond within a reasonable time, generally 30 days.

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 [admin@hamiltonmedical.com.au](mailto:admin@hamiltonmedical.com.au) for the attention of the Practice Manager. You may also use our Update Your Details Form and submit it in person. Please ask any staff member for a copy of this form.

#### **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. You can contact us via phone on 02 4961 1713 or via email at [admin@hamiltonmedical.com.au](mailto:admin@hamiltonmedical.com.au). For email, please allow 24-48 hours for an acknowledgment of receipt, (longer if sent after hours or on a weekend) and up to 21 days for a detailed response.

You may also contact us by writing to:

The Practice Manager  
59-61 Lindsay Street  
Hamilton NSW 2303

For mail, please allow 2 weeks for an acknowledgment of receipt, and up to 30 days for a detailed response.

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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](http://www.oaic.gov.au) or call the OAIC on 1300 363 992.

### **Privacy and our website**

Personal information may be collected when using the Hot Doc Online Booking service or the Hot Doc Repeat Prescription service via our website. This information may be stored by Hot Doc for the purpose of future bookings. If any credit card information is entered when using the Hot Doc Repeat Prescription service, this may be stored by Hot Doc for the purpose of a refund, if that becomes necessary.

Cookies from our website may be stored on your computer and are used to help our website load quicker on future visits. We do not use cookies to collect any personal information or IP address information from your computer. Cookies can be disabled by going in to your browser settings and selecting the option to disable cookies from our website.

We do not collect personal information via our social media pages or via email. We request that any personal information be given to us over the phone, via fax or in-person to ensure security of the information.

### **Policy review statement**

This privacy policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur. We will notify you via email (if consent has been provided) of any changes. We will also keep copies of the updated policy in our waiting room, on our website and on display in our information slideshow in the waiting room. If you would like a printed copy, or a copy emailed to you, please let us know by emailing [admin@hamiltonmedical.com.au](mailto:admin@hamiltonmedical.com.au) or calling 02 4961 1713.