



Stratford Medical Centre

Stratford Medical Centre Privacy policy

Current as of: 25/7/2024

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 Stratford Medical Centre (SMC), 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 the Medical Practitioners at our Practice 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, through electronic transfer of prescriptions (etp), My Health Record, e referrals and Shared Health Summary.
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.
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
- 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 ETP, My Health Record (e.g. via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).

- Accreditation and quality assurance activities to improve individual and community health care and practice management.
- For legal related disclosure as required by court of law.
- For the purposes of research only where de-identified information is used.
- To allow medical students and staff to participate in medical training/teaching using only de-identified information.
- Stratford Medical Centre , does not currently have the capacity to undertake real-time audio/visual recording or duplication of consultations including those conducted via telehealth and those conducted remotely. Should this change then the patient's permission would be sought for such recording

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 is stored electronically at our practice.

Patient information is stored on secure servers in Australia

Our practice stores all personal information securely, in password protected electronic format, all computers and programs are password protected.

Computers, printers and electronic devices and information contained on same, is not accessible, from reception or the waiting room area. Any paper documentation is kept away from the reception area and is shredded, after it has been transferred into the computer.

It is a condition of employment that all employees sign a confidentiality agreement.

[Privacy and Electronic communication](#)

[Emails](#)

Patient information will only be sent via email if it is securely encrypted according to industry standards, and where the patient has consented to this form of direct communication. The following disclaimer is used for all practice emails. **Disclaimer: This communication is confidential and intended only for the individual or entity to whom it is addressed. No part of the email should be copied, disclosed, or redistributed without Stratford Medical's authorisation. If you have received this in error, please notify the sender immediately of its incorrect delivery by reply email or phone and delete the correspondence. Note: Please do not send clinical queries or urgent matters via email as this inbox is reviewed by administrative staff only.**

Patients are discouraged from using email.

Facsimile

Stratford Medical uses fax to email to receive incoming faxes and email to fax to create outgoing faxes through our supplier's platform. Our supplier Access 4 completed 4 x ISO certification in 2024. The following disclaimer is used for all practice emails. **Disclaimer: This communication is confidential and intended only for the individual or entity to whom it is addressed. No part of the email should be copied, disclosed, or redistributed without Stratford Medical's authorisation. If you have received this in error, please notify the sender immediately of its incorrect delivery by reply email or phone and delete the correspondence. Note: Please do not send clinical queries or urgent matters via email as this inbox is reviewed by administrative staff only.**

Electronic Correspondence

Stratford Medical Centre uses medical objects and health links for electronic correspondence (e.g. specialist referrals, specialist letters, results etc.)

Website

Our website may use cookies. Cookies are files with small amount of data which may include an anonymous unique identifier . You may choose not to accept cookies in your browser. Links to third party websites are not covered by this policy. Please refer to third party websites for their privacy policies

Retaining Information

As required by legislation, we keep health information for a minimum of 7 years from the date of last entry in the patient record. If the patient is a child, the record must be kept until the patient attains or would have attained 25 years of age. Information that is no longer required to be held by law or needed is securely destroyed.

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 and our practice will respond within 7 working 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 our Practice Manager.

[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. Please submit any complaints to the:

Practice Manager
2/1 Kamerunga Road
STRATFORD 4870

We will respond to your complaint within 14 business days.

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 Officer of the Australian Information Commissioner - OAIC on 1300 363 992

[Policy review statement](#)

This privacy policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur. Updated copies of our Privacy Policy will be available in the waiting room and on our website.

