Aspendale Gardens Medical Centre

Privacy Policy

Introduction

At Aspendale Gardens Medical Centre, we respect your privacy and are committed to protecting your personal information.

This privacy policy explains how we collect, use, store and share your personal information, including your health information, and the steps we take to keep your information safe.

Why do we need your consent?

When you become a patient of our practice, you give consent for our doctors and practice staff to access and use your personal information so we can provide you with appropriate healthcare.

Only staff who need to access your information as part of their work will be able to do so.

If we need to use your information for another purpose, we will seek your consent where required.

Why do we collect and use your personal information?

We collect your personal information mainly so that we can:

- provide you with safe and appropriate healthcare
- manage your ongoing health and medical care
- communicate with you about your appointments and healthcare
- process Medicare, health fund and other payments or claims
- meet legal and regulatory requirements
- carry out practice audits and accreditation
- train our staff and improve our services.

What personal information do we collect?

Depending on your circumstances, we may collect information including:

- your name, sex, gender, pronouns and date of birth
- your address and contact details
- your cultural background
- your next of kin and emergency contact details
- your medical history
- your current and previous medications
- allergies and adverse reactions
- immunisation history
- social and family history
- relevant health risks
- your Medicare number, where available
- healthcare identifiers
- private health fund details
- other information needed to provide you with appropriate healthcare.

Can I deal with the practice anonymously?

You have the right to deal with us anonymously or using a pseudonym where it is practical to do so.

However, there may be situations where we need to identify you to provide healthcare, process payments or claims, or where we are required or authorised by law to do so.

How do we collect your personal information?

We may collect your information in a number of ways, including:

1. **When you register with our practice** – our reception staff will collect your personal and demographic information when you become a patient.
2. **During your medical care** – our doctors and healthcare professionals may collect additional information about your health during consultations, examinations, treatment and follow-up care.
3. **When you contact us** – we may collect information when you visit our website, email or SMS us, telephone the practice, make an online appointment or communicate with us through social media.
4. **From other sources** – where appropriate, we may receive information from:
    - your guardian or responsible person
    - other healthcare providers, such as specialists, allied health professionals and hospitals
    - community health services
    - pathology and diagnostic imaging providers
    - Medicare
    - the Department of Veterans' Affairs
    - your private health fund.

Where possible and appropriate, we will collect information directly from you.

When do we share your personal information?

We may share your personal information when it is necessary to provide healthcare or manage our practice.

This may include sharing information:

- with other healthcare providers involved in your care
- with organisations that provide services to our practice, such as information technology providers and accreditation agencies
- with authorised administrative staff who assist our practice with reception and administrative tasks
- through electronic prescriptions (eTP)
- through My Health Record, including Shared Health Summaries and Event Summaries
- when required or authorised by law, such as in response to a court subpoena
- when necessary to reduce or prevent a serious threat to someone's life, health or safety
- where required by law to report certain conditions or diseases
- to assist in locating a missing person
- to establish, exercise or defend a legal or equitable claim
- as part of a confidential dispute resolution process.

We will only provide access to your information to people who need it for their work or to meet a legal or healthcare requirement.

Except as described in this policy or where required or authorised by law, we will not share your personal information with another organisation without your consent.

Overseas administrative support

Our practice uses a receptionist located in **India** to assist with reception and administrative tasks.

As part of their work, our overseas receptionist may need to access limited personal information, such as your:

- name
- contact details
- appointment information

- other information reasonably necessary to perform their administrative duties.

This means that some of your personal information may be accessed from India.

We take reasonable steps to make sure that access to your information is limited to what is necessary for the receptionist to perform their duties and that your information is handled securely and confidentially.

Our overseas receptionist is required to follow our privacy and confidentiality requirements and applicable privacy obligations.

We also take reasonable steps to protect your information from unauthorised access, misuse, loss, alteration or disclosure.

Do we share your information outside Australia?

Because we use an overseas receptionist in India, some of your personal information may be accessed from outside Australia.

We will take reasonable steps to ensure that your information is appropriately protected when it is accessed overseas and that only authorised people have access to it.

We will not otherwise disclose your personal information overseas unless permitted or required by law, or with your consent where required.

Direct marketing

We will not use your personal information to send you direct marketing about our goods or services without your consent where consent is required.

If you have agreed to receive direct marketing, you can ask us to stop sending it at any time by contacting the practice in writing.

Research and improving our services

We may use information from our patients to help us improve the quality and safety of the healthcare services we provide.

Where we provide information to other organisations for population health research or analysis, we will use **de-identified information** where appropriate. This means information is handled so that individual patients cannot reasonably be identified.

The information used for these purposes is stored securely within Australia.

If you do not want your information included in these activities, please speak with our reception staff.

How do we store and protect your information?

Your personal information may be stored in different forms, including:

- electronic medical records
- letters and reports
- X-rays and diagnostic images
- CDs and other media
- photographs
- other medical and administrative records.

We take reasonable steps to keep your personal information secure and protect it from loss, misuse, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

Can I access my medical records?

Yes. You have the right to request access to the personal information we hold about you, including your medical records.

Requests for access should be made **in writing** to the practice.

We will consider and respond to your request within a reasonable period.

In some circumstances, access may be limited or refused where permitted by law. If this applies, we will explain the reason to you.

Can I ask you to correct my information?

Yes. We want to make sure the information we hold about you is accurate and up to date.

You can ask us to correct or update your information at any time.

Please make your request **in writing to the Practice Manager**.

From time to time, we may also ask you to confirm that your personal details are correct and current.

What if I have a privacy complaint?

We take privacy concerns seriously.

If you believe your privacy has been affected or have a concern about how we have handled your personal information, please contact us **in writing**.

We will investigate your concern and try to resolve it in accordance with our complaints and privacy procedures.

You can also contact the **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)**.

OAIC website: www.oaic.gov.au
Telephone: 1300 363 992

Generally, the OAIC will expect you to give our practice an opportunity to respond to your complaint before they investigate it.

Contacting the practice

If you have questions about this privacy policy, would like to access or correct your information, or wish to make a privacy complaint, please contact the **Practice Manager at Aspendale Gardens Medical Centre**.

Aspendale Gardens Medical Centre is committed to protecting your privacy and keeping your personal and health information safe.