



Junee Medical Centre

PRIVACY POLICY

KEEPING YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION PRIVATE IN OUR PRACTICE

Purpose

Junee Medical Centre is committed to ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of your personal and sensitive information.

Our Privacy Policy clearly describes how our Practice handles your personal information, including its collection, use, disclosure and security.

This Policy has been developed to comply with the Privacy Act 1988 and the associated Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) as well as State or Territory legislation that governs how private sector health service providers should handle your information, including but not limited to, health information.

Any changes to this Policy are effective immediately, upon the posting of the revised Policy on our website. If you do not accept the terms of this Policy, as amended from time to time, you must not access our services.

Definitions

Personal Information is or an opinion about an identified individual or an individual who is reasonably identifiable, whether that information or opinion is true or not, and whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.

The 'personal information' we collect includes your name, date of birth, address/es, contact details, Medicare number, healthcare identifiers and health fund details. Medical information may include medical history and any care you may need. GPs need information about your past and present health in order to provide you with high-quality care.

Sensitive Information is a type of personal information that is afforded a higher level of protection by privacy laws. It includes health, genetic and biometric information as well as information about race or ethnic origin, political opinions, membership of political, professional or trade associations or trade unions, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or practices and criminal record.

Consent

Junee Medical Centre is committed to ensuring that any personal information we collect is obtained lawfully, transparently and with your consent, whenever it is practical for us to do so.

By providing personal information to us, you consent to us collecting, using and disclosing your personal information as described in this Policy. In some circumstances, where it is not reasonable or possible for us to collect this information directly from you, a **responsible person**, such as your spouse, carer, power of attorney or parent, may consent on your behalf.

Your Medical Records

Our practice takes steps to ensure that your medical records:

- are accurate, complete, well-organised and legible;
- are up to date;
- contain enough information to allow another GP to care for you;
- contain a summary of your care;
- can be used to remind you, with your permission, to return for follow up, check-ups and reviews.

If you are uncertain why information is being requested, please ask your GP or the practice staff.

If you wish to remain anonymous while accessing healthcare services, please talk to the practice staff.

Collection of Personal Information

Our Practice collects personal information from patients, healthcare professionals, employees, contracted service providers, students, suppliers and other individuals involved in the course of our standard business operations.

The personal information we collect about you includes only the information that is necessary or required:

- to provide you with services, including coordinating and communicating with other healthcare providers involved in your care,
- for us to engage with you in the usual course of our business
- for administrative and internal business purposes, such as billing.

The personal information we collect may include:

- your name, age, gender, date of birth, contact details;
- information relating to your lifestyle and medical history;
- your Medicare number, pension or health care card numbers and private insurance details, when necessary for billing or other administrative purposes;
- personal information collected in the form of clinical images and samples
- payment details
- other information, such as religion and ethnicity, that may be relevant in our dealings with you.

We will usually collect your personal information directly from you or by email, telephone, written correspondence or via our website.

Our Practice may collect information from you in several ways, including:

- Via your New Patient Registration form when you first attend our Practice;
- During the course of providing medical services to you;
- During telehealth or audiovisual consultations;
- Through eHealth services such as My Health Record, electronic transfer of prescriptions;
- From National Cancer Screening registries;
- From other healthcare providers such as specialists, allied health professionals, hospitals, community health services, pathology and diagnostic imaging services involved in your care.

Where it is not reasonable or possible for us to collect this information directly from you, we may need to collect information about you from a third party. The third parties from whom we may collect your personal information include:

- Other health service providers, including healthcare professionals, hospitals, clinics and pathology practices.
- Your nominated responsible person (such as a relative or carer)
- The My Health Record program operated by the Australian Commonwealth Department of Health, if you have chosen to participate.
- Health insurers, law enforcement or other government instrumentalities, such as iCare.

Your Doctor will always explain to you the reason we are collecting your information from a third party and seek your consent to do so.

We may also collect information from a third party where your health may be at risk, and we need your personal information to provide you with emergency medical treatment.

This Practice does not record telehealth or audio-visual based consultations. The Doctors will make notes in your electronic medical record, based on your conversation, but no auditory or visual material is recorded or stored.

You are not required to provide personal information to us, however, if the information you do provide is inaccurate or misleading, the services we are able to provide may be affected or limited.

Providing your information to other Doctors

In this practice, it is normal for all GPs to have access to your medical records. If you have any concerns about this, please discuss them with your GP or practice staff.

It is important that other people involved in your care, such as medical specialists and other healthcare professionals, are informed of the relevant parts of your medical history, so they can provide the best care for you. Your GP will let you know when this is necessary.

How do we use your information?

Our Practice respects your right to decide how your personal information is used or shared. Our Practice will not share your personal health information with anyone else or another organisation unless:

- you have consented to this sharing, OR
- we are legally obliged to disclose the information, in which case your GP will first discuss with you the information that she or he is legally obliged to disclose, OR
- the information is necessary for you to obtain Medicare payments or other health insurance rebates, OR
- there is an overriding public health and safety interest in the release of the information.

We will not use or disclose your personal information for any purpose other than the primary purpose for which it was collected, or if you have consented to another, related reason.

The reasons your information may be used or disclosed include:

- to coordinate and/or communicate with healthcare providers involved in your care;
- to facilitate referrals to other providers and/or obtain second opinions;
- to conduct activities related to quality assurance/improvement processes, accreditation, audits, risk and claims management, patient satisfaction surveys and staff education and training;
- to liaise with Medicare, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Department of Health, Worker's Compensation insurance providers, health insurance providers or another payer or contractor of services;

- to fulfil regulatory and public health requirements, including liaising with regulatory or health authorities, as required by law;
- to send you standard reminders for results and preventative health activity invitations by text message, mail or email, to the number or address that you have provided to us;
- to handle a complaint or respond to anticipated or existing legal actions;
- to obtain feedback about our services;
- to provide advice or information to you about products, services, treatment options and research opportunities that may be of interest to you; and
- for billing and payments.

Our Practice uses software that allows document automation (i.e. personalized templates) to ensure only relevant clinical information is included in referrals and other outgoing correspondence between healthcare providers involved in your care.

Your health information will not ordinarily be sent overseas unless:

- you are informed and provide written consent for this to occur, and
- the overseas country receiving the information has privacy laws that are very similar to the Australian Privacy Principles.

Dealing with us anonymously

You have the right to deal with us anonymously or under a pseudonym, unless it is impractical for us to do so, or unless we are required or authorized by law to deal with only identified individuals.

Using health information for quality improvement and research

This practice may use patient health information to assist in improving the quality of care we give to all our patients, by reviewing the treatments used in the practice. It is our Policy that any information we collect and use for research, quality assurance activities and/or analytics is de-identified whenever possible and practical.

My Health Record

If you choose to participate in the My Health Record program, we may access your personal information from this source. We may also disclose your personal information by uploading your health information electronically to the My Health Record system if requested to do so.

If you do not want us to access personal information stored in your My Health Record or upload health information to it, you should opt out or choose to modify access controls within the My Health Record system.

Website

If you use or visit our website, you will not be identified as a user and no information will be collected about you, unless specifically provided through the 'Contact' portal.

Protecting Your Information

Australian Privacy legislation applies to all personal health information recorded in electronic and paper records. All records must be kept secure to protect against unauthorised access. This practice complies with these requirements to protect your information.

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure the information contains in your file is accurate, complete and current. To assist us in this process, please ensure you inform us if any of your personal information changes.

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure your personal information is protected from misuse, interference, unauthorized access, modification or disclosure. Our information and computer security processes are reviewed regularly to ensure we offer the required level of protection of your information. This includes passwords, network firewalls, access controls, encryption and physical security measures.

If we become aware of any unauthorized access or disclosure of your information, we will notify you promptly and provide you with a recommended course of action.

Access to your health information

You may ask our practice staff about any aspect of your healthcare, including information contained in your record. You can request access to your medical record and any other information the practice records about you.

If you request access to your medical record, your GP will need to consider if there may be a risk of physical or mental harm to you or any other person that may result from disclosure of your health information. Your GP may need to remove any information that will affect the privacy of other individuals.

Sharing information is important for good communication between you and practice staff. Your GP can provide a full explanation of the health summary or medical record you are provided access to.

Depending on what is involved, you may be asked to contribute to the cost of providing the information.

Direct marketing

This practice does not engage in direct marketing.

Resolving concerns regarding the privacy of your health information

If you have any concerns regarding the privacy of your personal health information or the accuracy of the information held by the practice, you should discuss these with practice staff. Inaccurate information can be corrected, or your concerns noted in your record. For legal reasons, the original notes will be retained.

Communication via Email

Email is one of the most prevalent and convenient forms of communication. GPs and general practices often receive requests from patients, other clinicians and third parties to send health information via email.

General practices must ensure their communication of health information is safe and secure. The use of unencrypted and unsecured email can create risks to the privacy and security of personal and sensitive health information.

What are the risks of using email to send healthcare information?

All forms of written communication involve an element of risk that information could be read by someone other than the intended recipient. The risks of using unsecured or unencrypted email include:

- emails can easily be sent to the wrong recipient
- email is often accessed on portable devices, such as smart phones, tablets and laptops, which are easily lost or stolen
- emails can be forwarded or changed without the knowledge or consent of the original sender
- email is vulnerable to interception.

To mitigate the risk of using email as a means of communication, our Practice has documented Policies and Procedures and our staff have been trained in appropriate use of emails.

Patient consent is required (preferably in writing) before any information is sent via email. This includes to the patient themselves, or to a third party. Patient consent is documented in the patient's EMR.

Email addresses are verified prior to sending emails. Any email containing personal information is password protected. If sent through Best Practice, the software encrypts the document with a 4-digit PIN. If sent as a PDF attachment, we use a practice-set password, which is disclosed only to the authorised recipient.

Please be aware that email communication is not a substitute for a face-to-face encounter with a physician. For this reason, it is the Policy of this practice that medical advice is NOT provided by email. Test results may be sent via email, only after the results have been discussed in a face-to-face consultation.

Our staff check emails continuously and print out email messages directed to our general practitioners. These staff may respond to patients on behalf of our practice and the general practitioner. Staff will try to reply within 48 hours of receipt of email. Our emails are not monitored after hours, on weekends or during periods of practice closure.

If patients fail to adhere to our privacy and email policies, we will discontinue our communication via email.

Review

Our Practice has the right to change our Privacy Policy at any time. If there are updates to our Privacy Policy, we will address the changes promptly and update the revision date of this document which will be available from reception and on our website. This policy is to be reviewed annually or following any significant legislative change affects this policy.

This policy was last reviewed on 3 January 2025.

This policy is due for next review 3 January 2026.

Contacts

Further information on privacy legislation is available from:

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner
1300 363 992

www.oaic.gov.au

Health and Disability Services Complaints Office

Western Australia – 1800 813 583

www.hadscowesternaustralia.gov.au/home/index.cfm

Information and Privacy Commission

New South Wales – 1800 472 679

www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/privacy/ipc_index.html

Practice Contact Details

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June NSW 2663

Phone: 6924 3022

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Email: jmdc4@bigpond.com

To contact our Practice Manager directly, please email Daneka George at

pm.juneemedicalcentre@gmail.com

If you have questions or a complaint about the privacy of your personal information, please ask to speak to our Practice Manager.