

Maffra Medical Group Privacy Policy

Current as of: April 2022

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 Maffra Medical Group, you provide consent for our Doctors 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 (eg 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. If you choose not to provide the Practice with the personal details requested, it may limit our ability to provide you with a full service including timely and appropriate communication and health care. We encourage you to discuss your concerns with our Practice Staff prior to your first consultation or with your doctor.

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. This practice participates in:
 - My Health Record which includes the creation of Shared Health Summaries and Event Summaries.

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 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 the Australian Privacy Principles and this policy
- with other healthcare providers
- when it is required or authorised by law (eg 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 medical defence purposes
- for the purpose of confidential dispute resolution process
- when there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (eg some diseases require mandatory notification)
- during the course of providing medical services which includes our participation in My Health Record – via the creation of a Shared Health Summary and/or 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.

Our practice may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services we offer to our patients through research and analysis of our patient data.

We may provide de-identified data to other organisation to improve population health outcomes. The information is secure, patients cannot be identified and the information is stored within Australia. You can let our reception staff know if you do not want your information included.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms which includes

paper records, electronic records, visual records (X-rays, CT scans, videos and photos) and audio recordings.

Our practice stores all personal information securely. We do this by:

- Securing our building
- Using passwords on all electronic systems and databases
- Varying access levels to protect information from unauthorised interference, access, modification or disclosure
- Storing hard copy records in a secure environment.

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 to your usual treating doctor and our practice will respond within 30 business days. A fee for the retrieval of your medical records may apply. This fee is not redeemable through Medicare. To protect the rights of a child's privacy, access to a child's medical information may at times be restricted for parents and guardians. Release of information will be referred back to the treating doctor where their professional judgement and the law will be applied.

Our practice will take reasonable steps to:

- Correct your personal information where the information is not accurate or up to date
- Check that the personal information held by our practice is correct and current.

One of the steps taken is that Practice Staff may ask you to confirm that your personal details are correct when you attend a consultation. Please let the Practice Staff know if the information is incorrect or not up to date.

Is my health information used for quality improvement, education and continuing professional development?

We may use your health information for quality improvement, education and continuing professional development. Maffra Medical Group uses a software package called Polar GP. This software assists us to find health issues and trends among patients. No identifiable patient information leaves this practice and all data is securely stored within Australia.

Is my health information shared in a de-identified form?

As part of a quality improvement initiative, your de-identified health information is grouped and passed onto the Gippsland Primary Health Network.

What if I don't want my de-identified health information shared?

Tell our Practice Staff and they will arrange for your de-identified health information to be removed from the grouped data.

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 have the option of making initial contact by phoning the practice on 03 5147 1011 and asking to speak with the Practice Manager. You can also express any privacy concerns you have in writing. Please direct them to the Practice Manager, 160 Johnson Street, Maffra, Victoria 3860. We will then attempt to provide a response within 30 days of receipt.

You may also contact the:

- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (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 OAIC on 1300 363 992.
- Health Complaints Commissioner. For further information visit <https://hcc.vic.gov.au/> or call 1300 582 113.

Privacy and our Maffra Medical Group website

When you visit our website www.mafframedical.com we may collect certain information such as browser type, operating system, etc. This information may be used in an aggregated manner to analyse how people use our site, such that we can improve our service.

Our website has links to third party websites that are not owned or controlled by us. These links are meant for your convenience only. Links to third party websites do not constitute sponsorship or endorsement or approval of these websites. We encourage our users to be aware, when they leave our website, to read the privacy statements of other websites being visited.

Policy review statement

Please be aware that we may change this Privacy Policy in the future. We reserve the right to modify this Policy at any time, in our sole discretion. All modifications will be effective immediately upon our posting of the updated Privacy Policy on our website or notice board. Please check back from time to time to review our Privacy Policy.

How can I obtain more information on how my privacy is protected?

Please ask to speak to the Practice Manager if you would like further information.