



At Beach Street Family Medicine, we are committed to maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of our patient's personal health information. This Privacy Policy outlines how we collect, use, store, and disclose patients' information in line with the **RACGP 5th edition standards** and applicable Australian privacy laws.

Purpose

To ensure patients who receive care from the Practice are comfortable in entrusting their health information to the Practice. This policy provides information to patients as to how their personal information (which includes their health information) is collected and used within the Practice, and the circumstances in which we may disclose it to third parties.

Background and rationale

The Australian Privacy Principles, known as APP, provide a privacy protection framework that supports the rights and obligations of collecting, holding, using, accessing and correcting personal information. The APP consist of 13 principle-based laws and apply equally to paper-based and digital environments. The APP complement the long-standing general practice obligation to manage personal information in a regulated, open and transparent manner.

This policy will guide Practice staff in meeting these legal obligations. It also details to patients how the Practice uses their personal information. The policy must be made available to patients upon request.

Practice procedure

The Practice will:

- provide a copy of this policy upon request
- ensure staff comply with the APP and deal appropriately with inquiries or concerns
- take such steps as are reasonable in the circumstances to implement practices, procedures and systems to ensure compliance with the APP and deal with inquiries or complaints
- collect personal information for the primary purpose of managing a patient's healthcare and for financial claims and payments.

Staff responsibility

The Practice's staff will take reasonable steps to ensure patients understand:

- what information has been and is being collected
- why the information is being collected, and whether this is due to a legal requirement
- how the information will be used or disclosed
- why and when their consent is necessary
- the Practice's procedures for access and correction of information, and responding to complaints of information breaches, including by providing this policy.

Consent

By engaging with our services, patients consent to the collection, use, and disclosure of their personal information as outlined in this policy. If you do not agree to this, please inform us before providing your information.



Collection of information

The Practice will need to collect personal information as a provision of clinical services to a patient at the practice.

We collect personal information from our patients in order to provide medical care and services, including:

- Name, address, date of birth, gender, and contact details
- Health information, including medical history, diagnoses, treatment, and test results
- Medicare number, private health insurance details, and billing information
- Emergency contact details

We collect personal information directly from our patients when they provide it to us during consultations or through any other interactions with our practice.

A patient's personal information may be held at the Practice in various forms:

- as paper records
- as electronic records
- as visual – x-rays, CT scans, videos and photos
- as audio recordings

The Practice's procedure for collecting personal information is set out below:

- Practice staff collect patients' personal and demographic information via registration when patients present to the Practice for the first time. Patients are encouraged to pay attention to the collection statement attached to/within the form and information about the management of collected information and patient privacy.
- During the course of providing medical services, the Practice's healthcare practitioners will consequently collect further personal information.
- Personal information may also be collected from the patient's guardian or responsible person (where practicable and necessary), or from any other involved healthcare specialists.

Various types of images may be collected and used, including:

- **CCTV footage:** Collected from the clinic premises for security and safety purposes
- **Photos and medical images:** These can be taken using personal devices for medical purposes, following the guidelines outlined in our guide on using personal devices for medical images.

Storage and Security of Information

We take reasonable steps to protect patient's personal information from misuse, loss, unauthorized access, modification, or disclosure. Our practice uses secure systems to store and handle patient's information, including physical and digital safeguards.

Use and disclosure of information

We use patient's personal information primarily for:

- Providing medical care and treatment
- Managing healthcare records
- Communicating with patients regarding appointments, results, and health reminders
- Billing and insurance purposes
- Complying with legal or regulatory obligations



We may disclose patient's personal information to:

- Other healthcare providers involved in patients' treatment (e.g., specialists, pharmacies)
- Medical insurers or health funds (as required for billing and claims)
- Government agencies for regulatory and reporting purposes (e.g., the Department of Health, My Health Record)
- Legal entities where required by law

The Practice will not disclose personal information to anyone outside Australia without need and without patient consent.

Exceptions to disclose without patient consent are where the information is:

- required by law
- 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
- When it is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (e.g. some diseases require mandatory notification)
- When it is provision of medical services, through electronic prescribing, My Health Record (e.g. via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary)
- to assist in locating a missing person
- to establish, exercise or defend an equitable claim
- for the purpose of a confidential dispute resolution process

The Practice will not use any personal information in relation to direct marketing to a patient without that patient's express consent. Patients may opt-out of direct marketing at any time by notifying the Practice in a letter or mail.

The Practice evaluates all unsolicited information it receives to decide if it should be kept, acted on or destroyed.

The Practice may use patient's personal information to improve the quality of the services offered to patients through research, analysis of patient data for quality improvement and for training activities with the practice team

We may provide de-identified data to other organisations to improve population health outcomes. The information is secure, patients cannot be identified, and the information is stored within Australia. Patients may inform reception staff if they do not want their information included.

Access and Correction of Personal Information

Patients have the right to access and request correction of their personal health information. To request access, please contact us at (03) 9781 5177. We may charge a fee for providing access to patient information, but patients are informed beforehand.

Anonymity and Pseudonymity

Patients can 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.

Data Retention

We retain patients' personal health information for as long as necessary to provide medical care and comply with legal and regulatory requirements. The retention period may vary depending on the nature of the information and the services provided.

Changes to this Privacy Policy

We may update this Privacy Policy from time to time. Any changes will be communicated through our practice or posted on our website.



Contact Us

If you have any questions or concerns about this Privacy Policy or how we handle patients' personal information, please contact us at:

Beach Street Family Medicine
61 Beach Street
Frankston VIC 3199
(03) 9781 5177
bsfmreception@bsfm.com.au

Patient feedback

This clinic is keen to receive feedback from our patients on the services we provide. This is important to us to help improve our service and meet your needs.

A "Suggestion Box" is located in the Waiting Area should you wish to make use of it. You have the right to remain anonymous and pseudonymous if you chose.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of the care you receive from this practice, we would like to know about it. Please discuss your concerns with your doctor or the practice manager Gráinne Breen.

Should you wish someone to mediate on your behalf, you could contact:

Health Complaints Commissioner
Level 26, 570 Bourke Street
Melbourne Vic 3000

Telephone: (61 3) 9032 3100
Toll Free: 1300 582 113
Web: <https://hcc.vic.gov.au>

If you have a complaint regarding how Beach Street Family Medicine handles your information, or you believe there has been a breach of The Privacy Act 1988 we urge you in the first instance to contact the Practice Manager – Gráinne Breen on (03) 9781 5177 or via email accounts@bsfm.com.au.

Alternatively, you may contact;

The Office of Australian Information Officer
GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 2001
Email: enquiries@oaic.gov.au
Web: <https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-complaints>

Telephone: 1300 363 992
Fax: (02) 9284 9666

Help lodging a complaint

If require assistance lodging a complaint you may use the services below:

Hearing or speech assistance

National Relay Service
Phone: 1300 555 727

Translator

<https://www.oaic.gov.au/contact-us#AssistedContact> www.tisnational.gov.au