 BLIGH PARK FAMILY PRACTICE

 Shop 10, Bligh Park Shopping Centre

 Colonial Drive. Bligh Park. NSW 2756

 Tel: 4572 7222 Fax: 4572 0230

 ABN No: 82 319 290 745

**Privacy Policy**

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.
When you register as a patient of our practice, you provide consent for our GPs 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.

1. 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.
1. Why do we need your personal information and what do we do with it?
2. Patient care

We collect, maintain, use and disclose personal information about you in order to assist our medical practitioners to provide you with appropriate care, treatment and services.

Your personal information is used by us and our medical practitioners:

* to provide you with medical care and services;
* to provide you and/or your doctor with information that may assist you in managing and improving your health; and
* as a medical history for you that allows our medical practitioners to provide you with better care as it assists with identifying changes to your health over time.
1. Operating our business

We use your personal information as necessary to manage our administration, including storage of data, and management of accounts and payment for the services provided to you.  Specifically, we will use and, where necessary, disclose your personal information to:

* obtain payment from, as appropriate, Medicare Australia, you, your private health insurance fund or from any organisation responsible for payment of any part of your account, such as the Department of Veterans Affairs;
* if the circumstances require, we may disclose your personal information to our insurers or those of our medical practitioners;
* manage and store your personal information in a secure fashion

We may use your personal information to communicate with you, including to:

* give you important information (including by SMS or telephone) about the products and services offered by our practices;
* respond to your online enquiries or process requests for appointments;
* send you appointment reminders (including by SMS or telephone) in relation to obtaining services from our practices. This enables us to contact you, for example, to make follow-up appointments to discuss test results, or to remind you that you, or a dependant, are due for an immunisation, pap smear, annual health assessment or other type of consultation or test.

Should you, at any time, wish to withdraw your consent for your Personal Information to be part of a de-identified information database, please  notify our Privacy Officer on the contact details provided at the end of this policy providing your Name, Surname, Date of Birth and Address.

If you proceed with withdrawing your consent, please be advised the relationship between you and your doctor will not be affected, nor will this hinder your ability to access services at Bligh Park Family Practice.

Where third parties undertaking research request identified data from our medical records, we will only provide identified data in response to these requests when authorised to do so by the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

If you do not provide us with all the personal information we request, our medical practitioners may not be able to provide services to you.  We only collect as much personal information from you as our medical practitioners need to provide you with services and to allow us to obtain payment on their behalf for those services.

1. How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms: electronic records, paper records and visual records (X-Rays, CT scans and photos)

Our practice stores all personal information securely by securing our premises. The electronic records are stored in password protected information systems. The paper and visual records are stored in locked cabinets. All staff have to sign confidentiality agreements at the commencement of their employment.

Our practice has a designated person (Dr Patel) with primary responsibility for the practice’s electronic systems, computer security and adherence to protocols as outlined in our Computer Information Security policy. We have confidentiality agreements signed by all staff. To protect and securely store your personal information we use an electronic format in a secured environment that is password protected.

1. Who do we share your personal information with?

We sometimes share your personal information:

* third parties who work with our practice for business purposes, such as accreditation agencies, information technology providers, and clinical team members such as allied health providers and non-dispensing pharmacists
* with other healthcare providers, both within and outside of the practice
* when it is required or authorised by law (eg court subpoenas)
* when it is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to a you or another patient’s life, health or safety, or public health or safety, or when it is impractical to obtain your consent
* to assist in locating a missing person
* to establish, exercise or defend an equitable claim
* for the purpose of confidential dispute resolution processes
* when there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (eg some diseases require mandatory notification)
* during the course of providing medical services, through Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions (eScript), MyHealth Record system (eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary), and Linked EHR systems.
1. Can you access your personal information we hold?

Yes. You may request access to the personal information we hold about you at any time.  You can also request that corrections be made to it.  We will respond to your request within a reasonable time.

There are some circumstances where we are not required to give you access to or correct your personal information.  We will normally give you a written notice setting out our reasons for not complying with your request and informing you of how you can complain about our refusal.

There is no fee for requesting access to your personal information or for us to make corrections.  However, we will charge a fee for our costs involved in collating and providing you with access to any personal information.  That fee is payable before access is given.

6. Medical records will only be provided if we have received a signed consent form.

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.

7. The process for providing information to another practice.

The practice prefers to receive written consent from the patient and a formal written request from the practice to where the health information is going. We will then transfer the medical record onto a DVD in either .xml or .html format, and the disc is sent to the new practice via registered post.

8. The use of health information for quality assurance, research and professional development.

We may use your personal information for internal teaching purposes or to monitor, evaluate, plan and improve the services provided at our practices.  We will only use de-identified information (information that does not contain any personal details that may reasonably identify you) for these purposes.

We may use your personal information to provide third parties (such as universities, government organisations and pharmaceutical companies) with de-identified health information. Before any health information is provided to a third party it is de-identified, that is, the name and address of the patient and any other information that could otherwise allow an individual to be identified, is removed from the health information. That de-identified information is then aggregated with the de-identified health information in respect of other patients.

9. The process of informing new patients about our privacy arrangements.

New patients are informed of our Privacy Policy via a notice in the practice waiting room, in our practice information brochure or on our website.

10. 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.

Complaints may be registered:

* Verbally to our staff
* Via our Suggestion Box (in the Waiting Area)
* In writing to

Bligh Park Medical Centre

Shop 10, Bligh Park Shopping centre

6 Colonial Drive

Bligh Park NSW 2756

You may stay anonymous, if desired. We will then attempt to resolve your complaint within 30 days, in accordance with our resolution procedure.
You may also contact the OAIC. Generally, the OAIC will require you to give us time to respond before they will investigate. For further information visit www.oaic.gov.au or call the OAIC on 1300 363 992.

11. The practices policy for retaining patient health records

We take reasonable steps, and implement reasonable safeguards, to ensure the protection of the personal information that we hold.  All patient information is handled securely and in accordance with professional duties of confidentiality.

Bligh Park Family Practice is subject to a range of rules relating to the periods for which health information and records must be retained.  We must generally retain health information about an individual:

* for at least 7 years from the last occasion on which we provided a health service to the individual – if we collected the information when the individual was 18 years old or older; or
* at least until the individual turns 25 – if we collected the information when the individual was less than 18 years old.

Email Policy

Our practice takes every effort to keep patient information safe, communication of patient information via email can potentially be compromised so this is done at the risk of the patient.

The types of information sent via email includes but limited to

* Ordering Supplies / Sample Medication
* Sending invoices for accounts
* Receiving requests for medical reports from Work Cover/Insurance Companies.
* Receiving updated health information
* Receiving Patient Complaints – to Practice Manager email
* Patients requesting referral letters, results or medical certificate to be emailed to them

Clinical information is only sent to patients after gaining verbal consent which is documented in the patient record. The process for sending information to patients is for the patient to send us a request for the information required, thereby giving us written consent and the information is then sent via return email back to the patient.

Our practice uses anti-virus and anti-malware software to protect all aspects of our computer and server systems. This includes screening/blocking all emails for viruses and fraudulent emails. Our practice holds the right to screen all patient correspondence via email for the above security issues.

Email Disclaimer Notice: We are unable to answer any MEDICAL related queries made on this email. Please ring the surgery to make an appointment relating to these matters. The information contained in the Email is intended for the name's recipient only. It may contain privileged and confidential information. If you are not the intended recipient you must NOT print, forward or take any action in reliance of the Email or disclose to any person, firm or corporation. If you received this Email in error, please notify the sender immediately by email at blighparkgp@gmail.com or by phone at 02 45727222

Email correspondences sent to our email address are retained as required by the Public Records Act 2002 and other relevant legislation. Email messages may also be monitored by our information technology staff for system trouble-shooting and maintenance purpose. Your email address details will not be added to a mailing list (unless you so request) or disclosed to a third party unless required by law.

This privacy policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur.

Social Media Policy
Bligh Park Family Practice does not use social media.

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 this policy will be available to patients at reception.

(Last updated 18/08/2022)