



PRIVACY POLICY

Introduction

This privacy policy is to provide information to patients who attend St James Family Medical & St James Specialist ("Facility"), how their personal information (which includes health information) is collected and used within the facility, and the circumstances in which it may be shared with third parties.

This facility follows the guidelines of the RACGP Standards for General Practices (5th Edition) and complies with the Australian Privacy Principles under the Privacy Act 1988.

Why and when consent is necessary

When patient's register at the facility, they provide consent for staff, doctors, nurses, midwives and other healthcare providers ("Team members") practicing at the facility, to access and use patient's personal information in order to provide the best possible healthcare. Only team members who need to see personal information will have access to it. If there is a need to use patient information for anything other purpose, the facility will seek additional consent from patients beforehand.

Why do we collect, use, hold and share patient's personal information?

The facility will need to collect your personal information to provide healthcare services to you. The main purpose for collecting, using, holding and sharing patient personal information is to manage a patient's health. The facility will use it for directly related business activities, such as financial claims and payments with Services Australia, facility audits and accreditation, and business processes (e.g. staff training, clinical case reviews).

What personal information do we collect?

The information we collect about patient's includes:

- Names, date of birth, addresses, contact details, emergency contact and next of kin details
- Medical information including medical history, medications, allergies, adverse events, immunisations, ethnicity, social history, family history and risk factors
- Medicare, DVA and concession card numbers (where available) for identification and claiming purposes
- Healthcare identifiers and health fund details

If a patient is uncertain why information is being requested, they are encouraged to ask their treating practitioner or administration staff.

Dealing with us anonymously

Patients have the right to deal with medical facilities anonymously or under a pseudonym unless it is impracticable for the facility to do so, or unless the facility is required or authorised by law to only deal with identified individuals.

How do we collect patient personal information?

This facility may collect personal information from patients in several different ways.

1. When the first appointment is made, reception staff will collect personal and demographic information to create a patient health record
2. During the course of providing medical services, the treating practitioner may collect further personal information
3. Information can also be collected through electronic transfer of prescriptions (eTP) and My Health Record
4. The facility may also collect personal information when patients visit the website, send an email or SMS, telephone the facility, make an online appointment or communicate with the facility using social media.
5. 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 a patient directly. This may include information from:
 - a guardian, carer or responsible person
 - other involved healthcare providers, such as specialists, allied health professionals, hospitals, community health services and pathology and diagnostic imaging services
 - a nominated health fund, Medicare, or the Department of Veterans' Affairs (as necessary).

When, why and with whom do we share patients' personal information?

Sometimes patient personal information is shared:

- with third parties who work with the facility for business purposes, such as accreditation agencies or information technology providers – these third parties are required to comply with APPs and this policy
- with other healthcare providers e.g. specialists, allied health providers, pathology and imaging services, hospitals and at-home care services who the patient is referred to by their doctor
- when it is required or authorised by law (e.g. 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 the purpose of confidential dispute resolution process
- when there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (e.g. mandatory notification of neglect, abuse and communicable diseases)
- during the course of providing medical services through eTP and My Health Record

Only people who need to access patient information will be able to do so. Other than in the course of providing medical services or as otherwise described in this policy, the facility will not share personal information with any third party without the patient's consent.

The facility will not share a patient's personal information with anyone outside Australia (unless under exceptional circumstances that are permitted by law) without patient consent.

The facility will not use patient personal information for marketing any of its goods or services directly to patients without their express consent. If consent is given, patients may opt out of direct marketing at any time by notifying the facility in writing.

The facility may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services offer to patients through research and analysis of its patient data.

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 can advise reception staff if they do not want your information included.

How is patient personal information stored and protected?

Patient personal information may be stored at the facility in various forms, including but not limited to:

- Electronic records in Best Practice
- Emails received from patients may be saved to their individual health record. These will also be stored in the email mailbox for a period of time until deleted
- Forms completed by patients are data entered, saved electronically and then confidentially shredded
- Records from other medical providers including results, are saved electronically and may be stored in the e-fax mailbox for a period of time until deleted
- Contact details for the purpose of video conference appointments will be stored in the secure Health Direct web-based system.

In accordance with the Patient Health Information Policy, the facility stores all personal information securely. Electronic records are held in a protected information system. Hard copies of documentation are held in the secure office facility until being confidentially shredded.

Healthcare providers, administration and nursing staff are required to comply with a confidentiality agreement, and their access to patient records is password protected.

How can patients access and correct their personal information at this facility?

Patients have the right to request access to, and correction of, their personal information. Sharing information is important for good communication between patients and their treating practitioner.

Treating practitioners are able to provide patients with a full explanation of their individual health summary and medical record if a patient is provided access to it. There is no fee for patients requesting access to their health records, however depending on what is involved, you may be asked to contribute to the cost of providing the information.

This facility acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. Patients are required to put this request in writing via email or submitted letter. The facility will respond to the written request within 30 days. The usual treating practitioner will need to consider if there may be a risk of physical or mental harm to the patient or any other person that may results from disclosure of the patient's health information. The usual treating practitioner may need to remove any information that will affect the privacy of other individuals.

The facility will take reasonable steps to correct a patient's personal information where the information is not accurate or up to date. Three points of ID will be verified with patients upon booking appointments and when checking in for their appointment. Patients may also request for their information to be corrected or updated. This can be done via telephone, email, submitted letter or by attending the clinic in person.

How can patients lodge a privacy-related complaint, and how will the complaint be handled at the facility?

Complaints and concerns regarding privacy are taken seriously by all staff and healthcare providers at the facility. Patients should express any privacy concerns they may have in writing. The practice manager will then attempt to resolve it in a timely manner in accordance with Complaints Policy. A copy of that document can be requested from the practice manager by calling 9352 2910, emailing manager@stjamesfamilymedical.com.au or attending the practice in person at 96 Forrest Road, Hamilton Hill WA.

Patients may also contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). Generally, before they will investigate, the OAIC will require the complainant to have lodged their complaint with the facility and allow time to respond. For further information visit www.oaic.gov.au or call the OAIC on 1300 363 992.

For further information on privacy legislation patients may visit the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office website www.hadsco.wa.gov.au or call them on 1800 472 679.

Policy review statement

This privacy policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects the current processes and procedures of the facility and meets current legislation requirements. A copy of the most current version of this policy is available on the website www.stjamesfamilymedical.com.au and in the facility waiting area.