

## Introduction

Northwest Health Medical Centre is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of our patients' personal information. Our principal concern is, and always will be, the health, safety and wellbeing of our patients.

This Privacy Policy explains how we collect, use, store and disclose your personal information (including health information), and how you may access and correct that information. This policy complies with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs).

## Why and When Your Consent Is Necessary

When you register as a patient at Northwest Health Medical Centre, you provide consent for our doctors and practice staff to collect, access and use your personal information to provide you with healthcare services.

Only staff who need to access your information to perform their duties will do so. All staff are required to sign confidentiality agreements as part of their employment.

If we intend to use your information for any purpose other than healthcare delivery or directly related business activities, we will seek your additional consent where required by law.

## Why We Collect, Use, Hold and Share Personal Information

We collect, use, hold and share your personal information primarily to:

- Provide medical care and manage your health
- Communicate with you about appointments, test results and care
- Support continuity of care with other healthcare providers

We may also use your information for directly related practice activities, including:

- Medicare and private health insurance claims
- Accreditation, quality improvement and audits
- Practice administration and staff training
- Legal and regulatory compliance

## What Personal Information We Collect

The personal information we may collect includes:

Full name, date of birth, address, phone number and email

Medical information including:

- Medical history, medications, allergies
- Immunisations, adverse events
- Family, social and occupational history
- Risk factors and relevant lifestyle information
- Medicare number (where applicable)



- Healthcare Identifiers
- Private health fund details
- Next of kin and emergency contact details

## Dealing With Us Anonymously

You may choose to deal with us without giving your name, or by using a different name, where it is reasonable to do so. However, in most cases we will need to know who you are to provide safe and appropriate medical care, or where the law requires us to identify you.

## How We Collect Your Personal Information

We collect personal information in several ways, including:

- When you register as a patient or book an appointment
- During consultations and while providing medical services
- Through My Health Record (where applicable)
- Via our website, email, SMS, telephone, online booking systems (including HOTDOC), and social media communication

From third parties where it is impractical to collect information directly from you, such as:

- Guardians or carers
- Other healthcare providers (specialists, hospitals, allied health, pathology and imaging services)
- Medicare, private health funds or the Department of Veterans' Affairs
- All information received electronically or from third parties is uploaded into your medical record where relevant.

## When, Why and With Whom We Share Your Personal Information

We may share your personal information:

- With other healthcare providers involved in your care
- With service providers who support our practice operations (e.g. IT providers, accreditation bodies), who are required to comply with privacy laws
- When required or authorised by law (e.g. subpoenas, mandatory disease notifications)
- To prevent or lessen a serious threat to life, health or safety
- For legal claims or dispute resolution
- To assist in locating a missing person
- Through My Health Record, ePrescribing and electronic referrals (where applicable)
- Only individuals who need access to your information will be permitted to do so.

We do not disclose personal information overseas unless required or permitted by law, or with your consent.

## Marketing and Communication

We will not use your personal information for direct marketing without your express consent. You may opt out of any marketing communications at any time by notifying the practice in writing.

## How We Store and Protect Your Personal Information

Your personal information may be stored in:

- Electronic medical records
- Paper records
- Visual and audio formats (e.g. imaging, photographs, videos, recordings)
- We take reasonable steps to protect your information from misuse, loss, unauthorised access or disclosure, including:
  - Secure electronic systems with password protection
  - Restricted access to authorised staff only
  - Secure physical storage of paper records
  - Confidentiality agreements for all staff

## Accessing and Correcting Your Personal Information

You have the right to request access to, and correction of, your personal information.

Requests must be made in writing. We may ask you to complete a consent form before releasing records. Records will usually be provided within 30 days. Fees may apply for copying or transferring records, and you will be advised in advance.

If you believe information held about you is incorrect or out of date, you may request correction by contacting reception or emailing [info.ludn@nwhmc.com.au](mailto:info.ludn@nwhmc.com.au)

## Privacy and Our Website

Our website may contain links to external sites. Northwest Health Medical Centre is not responsible for the privacy practices or content of linked websites.

We may collect anonymous website usage data for analytics purposes to improve our website. This information does not identify individual users.

Any personal information you provide via the website (such as email addresses) will be securely stored and used only for the purpose for which it was provided.

## Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Healthcare practitioners at Northwest Health Medical Centre may use artificial intelligence (AI) tools to assist with consultations and practice efficiency, such as recording, transcribing or drafting clinical notes.

AI tools are used responsibly and in accordance with professional, ethical, and legal obligations. Your



personal health information will only be used in AI systems that comply with privacy legislation.

AI use during or in connection with your consultation will only occur with your prior consent.

Consent is provided directly between you and your healthcare practitioner. Northwest Health Medical Centre does not accept liability for AI use where consent has been provided directly to the practitioner.

If you have questions or concerns about AI use, please discuss this with your healthcare practitioner before your consultation.

## Privacy Complaints

We take privacy complaints seriously. If you have a concern, please contact us:

**Email:** [info.ludn@nwahmc.com.au](mailto:info.ludn@nwahmc.com.au)

**Address:** Northwest Health Medical Centre

Shop 3, 16–30 Wilmington Road

Luddenham NSW 2745

**Phone:** 02 9128 3435 (Practice Manager)

We aim to respond within 1–2 weeks.

If you are not satisfied with our response, you may contact the **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC):**

**Phone:** 1300 363 992

**Website:** [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)

## Policy Review

This Privacy Policy may be updated from time to time. Any changes will be published promptly, and the review date will be updated.

### Disclaimer

The *Privacy policy template for general practices* is intended for use as a guide of a general nature only and may or may not be relevant to particular practices or circumstances. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) has used its best endeavors to ensure the template is adapted for general practice to address current and anticipated future privacy requirements. Persons adopting or implementing its procedures or recommendations should exercise their own independent skill or judgement or seek appropriate professional advice. While the template is directed to general practice, it does not ensure compliance with any privacy laws, and cannot of itself guarantee discharge of the duty of care owed to patients. Accordingly, the RACGP disclaims all liability (including negligence) to any users of the information contained in this template for any loss or damage (consequential or otherwise), cost or expense incurred or arising by reason of reliance on the template in any manner.