Palin Street Family Practice Policies

PRIVACY

This statement is to provide information to patients as to how their personal information (which includes their health information) is collected, stored, used and accessed within the Practice.

Unless otherwise consented, personal information will only be used for:

- The purpose of providing medical services – for use by all medical staff in this practice when consulting with you; for follow up reminder/recall notices and for communicating relevant information with other treating Doctors, specialists or allied health professionals.
- For claims and payments - Medicare and private health funds.
- For research purposes (de-identified, meaning you are not able to be identified from the information given).

The Practice *will not* disclose personal information to any third party other than in the course of providing medical services, without full disclosure to the patient or the recipient, the reason for the information transfer and full consent from the patient.

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.
- 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 acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. Patients are encouraged to make this request in writing, and we will respond within a reasonable time.

From time to time, the Practice will ask patients to verify the personal information held by the Practice is correct and up to date. Alternately a patient may ask for their information to be amended if it is not accurate or complete.

Our Practice complies with the Australian Privacy Principles and a full copy of the RACGP – 'Privacy and Managing Health Information in General Practice' is available at reception upon request.

For further information on the Australian Privacy principles please visit www.oaic.gov.au

We take complaints and concerns about patient privacy seriously. Please discuss any concerns, questions or complaints regarding the privacy of your personal information with your Doctor. If you are still dissatisfied you can complain to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) on the website above or by phoning 1300 363 992

FEES AND BILLING

We are a private billing practice and fees are payable at the time of consultation. We accept cash, cheque, EFTPOS, MasterCard, Visa and American Express.

All other fees including those for pensioners and Health Care card holders are charged at the discretion of the doctors.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Whilst we understand there are sometimes extenuating circumstances, where possible please ensure you give us at least 2 hours notice if you need to cancel your appointment. This enables other patients to attend for an appointment.

Failure to attend your appointment or to give adequate notification of cancellation will incur a fee.

PRESCRIPTIONS

Repeat prescriptions can be requested online (insert link to request a script) **excludes authority scripts, addictive medication and new patient requests*

Alternatively, you can book a telephone consult with a GP. **medicare rebates apply depending on eligibility*

RESULTS AND RECALLS

Generally if you need a follow up appointment for results you will receive an SMS or a recall letter if it is a non urgent result. Our nurses will contact you if it is an urgent recall.

REFERRALS

Please note that it is illegal for doctors to back date a referral. You need to ensure you referral is up to date before you see your specialist or you will not be eligible for a rebate from Medicare.
For further information please see our brochure or ask one of our friendly staff.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Staff are mindful that even if patients have provided electronic contact details they may not be proficient in communicating via such means and patient choice should be obtained before electronic communication is chosen.

Patients are able to obtain advice or information related to their care or appointment reminders by electronic means, where the doctor determines that a face-to-face consultation is unnecessary. Electronic communication includes: email, fax, and SMS.

Practice staff and doctors determine how they communicate electronically with patients, both receiving and sending messages. All significant electronic contact with patients is recorded in the patient health records.

Patients are informed of any costs incurred prior to electronic consultations.

Practice staff and doctors should be aware of alternative modes of communication used by the disabled.

Patients are advised in the Practice Information sheet that they can request our written policy on receiving and returning electronic communication.

Communication with patients via electronic means (e.g. email and Fax) is conducted with appropriate regard to the privacy Laws relating to health information and confidentiality of the patients health information. (Refer section 6 of full written policy)

Staff and Patients using email/SMS or other forms of electronic messaging should be aware that it is not possible to guarantee that electronic communications will be private. All personal health information or sensitive information sent by email must be securely encrypted. (Refer to section 6 of full written policy).

When an email message is sent or received in the course of a person's duties, that

message is a business communication and therefore constitutes an official record.

Internal or external parties, including patients may send electronic messages. Messages from patients or those of clinical significance require a response to confirm receipt and should be documented in the patient medial record if appropriate.

Employees should be aware that electronic communications could, depending on the technology, be forwarded, intercepted, printed and stored by others. Electronic mail is the equivalent of a post card.

Staff members have full accountability for emails sent in their name or held in their mailbox, and are expected to utilise this communication tool in an acceptable manner.

This includes (but is not limited to):

- limiting the exchange of personal emails
- refraining from responding to unsolicited or unwanted emails
- deleting hoaxes or chain emails
- not opening email attachments from unknown senders
- virus checking all email attachments
- maintaining appropriate language within e-communications
- ensuring any personal opinions are clearly indicated as such
- confidential information (e.g. patient information) must be encrypted.

The Practice reserves the right to check any Practice email as a precaution to fraud, viruses, workplace harassment or breaches of confidence by employees. Inappropriate use of the Email facility will be fully investigated and may be grounds for dismissal.

The practice uses an email disclaimer notice on outgoing emails that are affiliated with the practice which reads “Please note if you have received this email in error please notify the practice immediately and delete the email. It is against the privacy act to disclose any information to another party”.