

Patient Privacy

This practice is bound by [The Privacy Act 1988 \(Privacy Act\)](#) an Australian Law which regulates the handling of personal information about individuals. This includes the collection, use, storage and disclosure of personal information and access to and correction of that information.

The maintenance of privacy requires that any information regarding individual patients (including staff members who may be patients) many not be disclosed either verbally, in writing, in electronic form, by copying either at the Practice or outside it, during or outside work hours, except for strictly authorised use within the patient care context at the Practice or as legally directed.

There are no degrees of privacy. All patient information must be considered private and confidential, even that which is seen or heard and therefore is not to be disclosed to family, friends, staff, or others without the patient's approval. Any information given to unauthorised persons will result in disciplinary action and possible dismissal. Each staff member is bound by his/her privacy agreement, which is signed upon commencement of employment at this Practice.

Patient information is stored in a way that reasonably protects it from misuse, loss, interference, unauthorised access, modification and disclosure. Examples of personal patient information that may be collected includes name, address, date of birth, phone number/s, email addresses, emergency contact details and medical details. Any personal information obtained is for the purpose of providing care and services to you. It is important that where appropriate you update your personal information as soon as practical so our records can be updated. When personal information is no longer needed, reasonable actions will be taken for it to be destroyed. Most personal information will be kept or stored in patient files for a minimum of 7 years.

All information received during a consultation between a Doctor and the patient is considered personal health information. This information includes medical details, family information, address, employment, and other demographic and accounts data obtained via reception. Medical information can include past medical and social history, current health issues and future medical care. It includes the formal record, whether written or electronic, and information held or recorded on any other medium e.g. letter, fax or electronically.

Doctors and all other staff in this Practice have a responsibility to maintain the privacy of personal health and related financial information. The privacy of this information is every patient's right.

The physical medical records and related information created and maintained for the continuing management of each patient are the property of this Practice. The Practice must ensure the protection of all information contained therein. This information is deemed a personal health record and while the patient does not have ownership of the records, he/she has the right to access under the provisions of the Commonwealth Privacy and State Health Record Acts. Requests for access are to provided in a written (with signed consent) format and are to be noted in the patient's medical record. The Clinic will not charge a fee for a request but may charge a fee for providing a copy of health information.

Personal health information is to be kept out of view and not for any access by the public.

The Clinic does not use "cookies" to track internet activity and note that we do not guarantee external (third party) website links or their policies.

Reception and other Practice staff in the main reception area must be mindful that the waiting room is adjacent and as such, staff should maintain low noise levels and not discuss patients, thereby avoiding patient information being inadvertently being heard by patients, visitors or persons in the waiting room.

Access to computerised patient information is strictly controlled with personal passwords. Staff do not disclose passwords to unauthorised persons. Screensavers are in place when information is not being used. Terminals are logged off when the computer is left unattended. Computer screens are not to be in public view.



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Hard-copy formats of patient letters, reports, x-rays etc are to be received by staff and scanned to go directly to the Doctor to view in Medical Director software. Hard-copy documents can also be placed in Doctor's tray by staff. Electronically downloaded pathology and other reports go directly to Medical Director software for Doctor to view. Items for courier pick-up are to be left at the reception desk in appropriate trays behind the counter, out of direct public view.

When patients are in consultation with a Doctor, the door is to be closed for privacy. Patients also have a curtain within each consulting room for additional privacy if required for dressing and undressing. Whenever a door to any office, consulting or treatment room is closed, staff should knock and wait for a response prior to entering, or telephone prior to opening the door to enter. Doors to consulting/treatment rooms are not to be locked except for when the Doctor is not in and conducting consultations.

Your personal information may be disclosed in several circumstances including third parties where patient consent is provided i.e. medical reports or where required by law. Where a report for a third party is documented, having satisfied criteria for release (including patient written consent) then the patient's Doctor may specify a charge to be incurred by the patient or third party to meet the cost of the time spent preparing the report.

This policy may change at any time. The Privacy Policy is available at our office or on our website.

If you have any enquiries or wish to lodge a complaint, you can do so by contacting the Practice:

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56-60 Nixon Street, Shepparton VICTORIA 3630
Ph: (03) 5831 2333
Fax: (03) 5821 6334
Email: manager@listerhouse.com.au

