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# GENERAL SURGERY ARMADALE

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## Privacy Policy

This Privacy Policy gives you the details on how we use and manage your personal information, including the information that can identify you and information regarding your past and current health. As a medical practice we are bound by the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988, the Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012. We also have professional and ethical obligations to protect and keep your personal information confidential.

This Privacy Policy is current from 01 February 2017. From time to time we may make changes to our policy, processes and systems in relation to how we handle your personal information. We will update this Privacy Policy to reflect any changes. These changes will be available in our practice.

### **What types of personal information do we collect?**

We only collect the information that is necessary for providing quality healthcare. Such information collected from patients and prospective patients may include;

- name and contact details
  - age, date of birth and gender
  - medical history
  - current GP details
  - details about your current health and medications
  - medicare and health insurance details
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### **How do we collect information?**

We collect personal information usually directly from the patient. On occasion we may need to collect information from other sources these may include your GP, other medical specialists, other health care providers including hospitals, endoscopy, radiology and pathology.

This information will either be collected by medical or practice staff. In emergency situations we may need to collect information from relatives or other individuals who know you.

### **How do we use your personal information?**

We may use your personal information for any of the following purposes:

- general administration purposes and running of our practice.
- to invoice you our fees including compliance with medicare
- to process your health claims
- to contact you for follow up services and reminders for attending appointments
- to collect unpaid invoices

With your consent the information may be passed on to others for the following reasons:

- Referral to another medical practitioner or healthcare provider, for the purpose of seeking a second opinion on your treatment; treatment in hospital; quality assurance and complaint handling; to laboratories if sending samples for analysis or seeking advisory services related to your treatment.

### **Data quality and security**

We request that you let us know if any of the information we hold about you is incorrect or out of date. The practice staff may ask you to confirm your contact details the you attend a consultation.

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If you believe that the information we have about you is not accurate, complete or up to date, we ask that you contact us in writing.

We provide ongoing training to our staff to ensure the personal information which we hold is kept confidential.

We only keep electronic records on all patients' personal information. We take steps to protect these records against loss, misuse, unauthorised access, use, modification or disclosure. We ensure there are security processes in place regarding computer access. We take steps to ensure that electronic data is backed up.

We and our contracted service data storage provider use systems and servers within Australia and comply with Australian Privacy laws.

After a period of 7 years (or in the case of a person under 18, until the person turns 25) we may securely destroy or de-identify your records in accordance with Australian laws.

### **Circumstances for releasing personal information**

- if you ask us in writing or provide us with written consent to disclose your information to a third party;
  - in an emergency situation, if you have nominated relatives or next of kin as an emergency contact;
  - to other specialists or healthcare providers, for the purpose of seeking a second opinion or referral;
  - to laboratories if sending samples for analysis or seeking advisory services;
  - if there is a legal requirement to do so;
  - your prior approval has been obtained to provide a written report to another health care provider.
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We take reasonable steps to ensure that the information we collect from you is up to date and complete. These steps include;

- maintaining and updating your personal information when you attend the practice;
- amending information when you let us know that any of your information has changed.

### **Accessing your personal information**

- You have the right to access your personal information that we hold about you at a time convenient to yourself and our practice. You are required to make a written request.
- reasonable administrative costs may be charged but the amount charged will be limited to recouping our costs of the request.
- We will always try to meet your request in a reasonable amount of time;

In some circumstances your request may be denied. These circumstances include:

- if we no longer hold the personal information about you;
- if your request is frivolous;
- if the information requested relates to existing or anticipated legal proceedings and would normally be disclosed as part of those proceedings;
- if providing access would be unlawful;
- if denying access is required or allowed by law;

If we are unable to give you access to the information requested, we will give you a written explanation for this decision.

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### **Our contact information and resolving your concerns**

You can contact us during office hours if you have any questions, concerns or a complaint about this Privacy Policy or the way we collect, store and disclose your personal information.

We will always try to respond to you and address any questions, concerns or complaints within a reasonable time.

We request that your concern or complaint be in writing.