



The Surgery at Jerra
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PATIENT PRIVACY POLICY

Introduction

This privacy policy is to provide information on how a patient's personal information (which includes health information) is collected and used within our practice, and the circumstances in which we may share it with third parties. We have an open and transparent process for the management of personal information.

The Surgery at Jerra takes privacy and security of personal health information very seriously. All our staff sign patient confidentiality agreements.

A patient's personal information

A patient health record refers to the information held by The Surgery at Jerra in relation to a patient's care and if someone reading it would be able to identify a patient. Our clinical staff need information about past and present health issues in order to provide high-quality care. This includes:

- Family history
- Allergies
- Medications, including dosages
- Immunisation and vaccination history
- A clinical history
- Record of past visits
- Consultation notes
- Correspondence in and out
- Chronic health problems
- Social history
- Risk factors
- Contact details and individual healthcare identifiers

Medical Records

The GP and/or practice nurse will do their best to ensure a patient's medical record:

- Is accurate, comprehensive, well-organised and easily understood
- Up to date
- Have enough information to allow another doctor to continue patient care
- Does not contain offensive or irrelevant comments about a patient
- Contains a summary of patient care
- Can be used to remind a patient (with their permission) to return to the practice for a follow up, recall, check up or review



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Why and when your consent is necessary

When a patient is registered at The Surgery at Jerra, they need to provide written consent for our GPs and practice staff to access and use their personal information to ensure the best possible healthcare is provided. Only staff who need to see a patient's personal information will have access to it. If a patient's information is needed for anything else, additional consent is needed.

Why do we collect, use, hold and share your personal information?

Our practice needs to collect a patient's personal information to provide healthcare services. The main purpose for collecting, using, storing and sharing personal information is to manage a patient's primary health care. We also use it for directly-related business activities, such as financial claims and payments, practice audits and accreditation, and business processes (eg staff training).

If a patient is unsure why information is requested, please ask the doctor, nurse or admin staff.

What personal information do we collect?

The information we will collect about a patient includes your:

- names, date of birth, addresses, contact details
- medical information including medical history, medications, allergies, adverse events, immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors
- Medicare number (where available) for identification and claiming purposes
- healthcare identifiers
- health fund details.

Dealing with us anonymously

Patients have the right to deal with the practice without identifying themselves or under a pseudonym for safety reasons unless it is impractical for us to do so or unless we are required or authorised by law to only deal with identified individuals.

How do we collect your personal information?

Our practice may collect a patient's personal information in several different ways.

1. When a new patient makes their first appointment, our practice staff will collect personal and demographic information via registration.
2. During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information. For example: My Health Record, eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary.
3. We may also collect personal information when a patient sends the practice an email, telephones, or make an online appointment.
4. 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 or responsible person
 - other involved healthcare providers, such as specialists, allied health professionals, hospitals, community health services and pathology and diagnostic imaging services
 - a health fund, Medicare, or the Department of Veterans' Affairs (as necessary).



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- Another third party such as an employer, worker's compensation body or law firm

AI Scribe Tools

Our Doctors may use an AI scribe tool within their consults with you. This allows them to concentrate on you whilst the AI system is taking the notes of the consult in the background. The doctor will obtain your consent prior to your consult. You do not have to consent to this for your consult to proceed. AI scribe tools that are introduced at TSAJ meet the Australian Privacy Principles.

If you would like more information please scan the QR codes below.



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

In this practice, it is customary for all doctors to have access to all medical records to allow for continuity of care. If a patient has any concerns about this, they can discuss it with their regular GP.

We sometimes share a patient's personal information:

- with third parties who work with our practice for business purposes, such as accreditation agencies or information technology providers – these third parties are required to comply with the Australian Privacy Principles and this policy
- with other healthcare providers
- visiting medical students (confidentiality agreement signed)
- when it is required or authorised by law (eg 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 a confidential dispute resolution process
- when there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (eg some diseases require mandatory notification)
- during the course of providing medical services (eg My Health Record via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary)

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

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



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Our practice will not use a patient's personal information for marketing any of our goods or services directly without your express consent. If a patient does consent, they may opt out of direct marketing at any time by notifying our practice in writing.

Quality Improvement

Our practice may use patient personal information to improve the quality of the services we offer to our patients through research and analysis of our patient data.

We only do this for activities approved under Federal and State legislation. There are also safeguards in place to protect confidentiality. Only information which is necessary to achieve the objective is provided.

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 let our reception staff know if they do not want their information included.

However, in some circumstances where the research is very much in the public interest, identifiable medical records may be used for medical research without your consent under guidelines issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council. This research must be approved by an official ethics committee.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

A patient's personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms - predominantly electronically in our Practice Software System, Best Practice. This system is password protected ensuring the security of all stored information and has a number of back up and cybersecurity systems in place.

How can a patient access and correct their personal information at our practice?

Patients have the right to request access to, and correction of, their personal information.

Our practice acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. We require this request in writing, preferably via email to reception@tsaj.com.au and our practice will respond within a reasonable time.

Information may be provided to a patient in the form of an accurate and up-to-date summary of care. The regular GP must approve any request.

Our practice will take reasonable steps to correct personal information where the information is not accurate or up to date. From time to time, staff will ask a patient to verify their personal information held by our practice is correct and current. Patients may also request that we correct or update personal information, and should make such requests in writing via email to reception@tsaj.com.au unless it involves changing a name, next of kin or emergency contact details, where a patient will be asked to fill in an updated Patient Information Record.

Telehealth

This practice offers telehealth consultations at certain times. Primarily, our GPs are conducting phone consults. Telehealth is incorporated into our practice privacy policy. All communication, including data, video and audio, is encrypted and authenticated. Patients do not need to sign up and no patient information is captured by the telehealth platform provider (GP consults). Patients are not permitted to record or distribute any audio or video of the consultations as it breaches our practice privacy policy.

Concerns about privacy breaches

This practice complies all relevant privacy legislation and follows Australian standards. If someone has any concerns regarding the privacy of a patient's health record or the accuracy of the personal health information held by the practice, these issues can be discussed with the doctor. Inaccurate information will be corrected or the concerns will be noted in the patient's record. For legal reasons, the original notes will be retained.



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If a patient would like to make a formal complaint, they should contact the practice manager on 02 6255 8112 or email practicemanager@tsaj.com.au. The issue will be investigated, and an initial response will be made within ten working days. All alleged privacy breaches are checked against the Australian Privacy Principles.

Privacy Legislation

For information on Privacy Legislation, you can contact:

- Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner 1300 363 992
- Office of the Health Services Commissioner 1800 136 066

Document Automation Technology

The Surgery at Jerra uses document automation technology (ie drop down or selected inclusions) to produce several types of documents. For example, doctors write specialist referrals for patients. GPs will only capture the relevant personal or medical information specific to the referral. This reduces the chance of errors in information such as current medications and medical observations.

Confidential Waste

The practice uses an approved confidential waste management company to destroy any paper documents containing sensitive information. We scan all materials into patient files and destroy originals.

Policy review statement

This Policy will be reviewed yearly to take into account new laws and technology, changes to our operations and other necessary developments.

The Surgery at Jerra

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