

Privacy Policy

Managing your Health Information.

Carlingford Medical Clinic Suite U12-1 Carlingford Village, 372 Pennant Hills Road, Carlingford. (02) 9872 733



Carlingford Medical Clinic privacy policy

Current as of: **December 2025**

Introduction

This privacy policy is to provide information to you, our patient, on how your personal information (which includes your health information) is collected and used within our practice, and the circumstances in which we may share it with third parties.

What is a patient health record?

A patient health records improve patient safety and wellbeing as they support clinical decision making. A complete patient health record assists Carlingford Medical Clinic to easily access information on a patient's allergies or the patient's medical history. This will include identification information, contact details, demographic information, next of kin, emergency contact, risk factors, and medical history.

Carlingford Medical Clinic will keep and securely store and dispose of health records of active and inactive patients in accordance with legal obligations imposed by the *Privacy Act 1988* and the APPs.

An inactive patient is generally defined as a patient who has attended the practice twice or less in the past two years.

Why and when your consent is necessary

When you register as a patient of our practice, you provide consent for our GPs and practice staff to access and use your personal information so they can provide you with the best possible healthcare. Only staff who need to see your personal information will have access to it. If we ever use your personal information for purposes other than outlined in this document, we will obtain additional consent from you.

It is important to us that as our patient, you understand why we collect and use your personal information.

By acknowledging this Privacy Policy you consent to us collecting, holding, using, retaining and disclosing your personal information in the manners described below.

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

The practice collects, uses, stores, and shares your personal information primarily to manage your health safely and effectively. This includes providing healthcare services, managing medical records, and ensuring accurate billing and payments. Additionally, we may utilise your information for internal quality and safety improvement processes such as practice audits, accreditation purposes, and staff training to maintain high-quality service standards.

What personal information do we collect?

The information we will collect about you 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

You have the right to deal with us anonymously or under a pseudonym unless it is impracticable 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 your personal information in several different ways.

1. When you make your first appointment our practice staff will collect your personal and demographic information via your registration.
2. During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information. The practice participates with My Health Record.

Information can also be collected through My Health Record, eg. Via Shared Health Summary or Event Summaries.

3. We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email or SMS, telephone us, make an online appointment, or communicate with us using social media.
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 you directly. This may include information from:
 - your guardian or responsible person
 - other involved healthcare providers, such as specialists, allied health professionals, hospitals, community health services and pathology and diagnostic imaging services
 - your health fund, Medicare, or the Department of Veterans' Affairs (as necessary).
 - While providing medical services, further personal information may be collected via:
 - electronic prescribing
 - My Health Record
 - online appointments.
 - Various types of images may be collected and used, including:

- CCTV footage: Collected from our premises for security and safety purpose
- Photos and medical images: These can be taken using personal devices for medical purposes, following the guidelines outlined in our guide on using personal devices for medical images.

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

We sometimes share your 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 APPs and this policy
- with other healthcare providers (e.g. In referral letters)
- 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 confidential dispute resolution process
- when there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (eg some diseases require mandatory notification)
- When it is provision of medical services, through electronic prescribing. My Health Record (eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).

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

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

Will your information be used for marketing purposes?

The practice will not use your personal information for marketing any of our goods or services directly to you without your express consent. If you do consent, you may opt out of direct marketing at any time by notifying our practice in writing.

How is your information used to improve services?

The practice may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services we offer to patients through research and analysis of patient data for quality improvement and for training activities with the practice team.

We may provide de-identified data to other organisations to improve population health outcomes. If we provide this information to other organisations patients cannot be identified from the information we share, the information is secure and is stored within Australia. You can let reception staff know if you do not want your de-identified information included.

At times, general practices are approached by research teams to recruit eligible patients into specific studies which require access to identifiable information. You may be approached by a member of our practice team to participate in research. Researchers will not approach you directly without your express consent having been provided to the practice. If you provide consent, you would then receive specific information on the research project and how your personal health information will be used, at which point you can decide to participate or not participate in the research project.

How are document automation technologies used?

Document automation is where systems use existing data to generate electronic documents relating to medical conditions and healthcare.

This practice uses automated technologies. As your privacy is always our utmost concern, electronic documents generated by our practice such as referrals, medical certificates, e-scripts etc. utilise appropriate and secure document automation technologies. These documents contain only your relevant medical information.

These document automation technologies are used through secure medical software:
Best Practice Software Pty Ltd.

All users of the medical software have their own unique user credentials and password and can only access information that is relevant to their role in the practice team.

The practice complies with the Australian privacy legislation and APPs to protect your information.

All data, both electronic and paper are stored and managed in accordance with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners [Privacy and managing health information guidance](#).

Audio/visual recording

Carlingford Medical Clinic does not store or duplicate any audio/visual recordings of consultations, whether face-to-face or telehealth. Informed consent is always sought prior to the commencement of a consultation. If conducting video consultations, Carlingford Medical Clinic utilises a secure video software system which meets all the relevant legal requirements and standards. The video software system has the appropriate level of security authentication protocols and all necessary unique user access credentials in place to ensure security integrity.

The practice may use from time to time, an AI scribe tool to support GPs take notes during their consultations with you. The AI scribe uses an audio recording of your consultation to generate a clinical note for your health record. The practice AI scribe service is *HEIDI HEALTH*

Heidi Health

- Does not share information outside of Australia
- Destroys the audio file once the transcription is complete.
- Removes sensitive, personal identifying information as part of the transcription

The practice will only use data from our digital scribe service to provide healthcare to you.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

This practice uses electronic records. Any other form of patient information e.g., recent specialist letters, X-rays, CT scans and pathology results are kept well away from public view. Once action has been taken, these documents are destroyed or by appropriate security measures. In our practice, we keep personal health information secure by screen savers, passwords, anti-viral software, firewalls, data backups and regular maintenance. All staff sign a confidentiality agreement on being employed at Carlingford Medical Clinic and maintain the highest level of confidentiality that is required for accreditation with the medical board.

How can you access and correct your personal information at the practice?

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

The practice acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. We require you to put this request in writing a consent form will need to be completed and signed by the patient before we can release or transfer the patient's health record. The practice will usually respond to this request within 14 days. The practice charges a reasonable fee for the request of or transfer of a patient's health records

The practice will take reasonable steps to correct your personal information where the information is not accurate or up to date. From time to time, we will ask you to verify that your personal information held by the practice is correct and current. You may also request that we correct or update your information, and you should make such requests in writing to the Practice Manager, U12-1, Level 3, 372 Pennant Hills Road, Carlingford NSW 2118

How can you lodge a privacy-related complaint, and how will the complaint be handled at the practice?

We take complaints and concerns regarding privacy seriously. You should express any privacy concerns you may have in writing. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with the resolution procedure. Any complaint received will be actioned immediately with the intent to be resolved within 14 days. Complaints should be addressed to the attention of the Practice Principal or Practice Manager, U12-1, Level 3, 372 Pennant Hills Road, Carlingford NSW 2118.

Should you wish to speak to management, they can be contacted on (02)9872 7333.

If you do not feel we have resolved your issue You may also contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner. The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner will require you to give them time to respond before they investigate. For further information visit www.oaic.gov.au or call the OAIC (Office of the Australian Information Commissioner) on 1300 363 992.

Privacy and our website

At Carlingford Medical Clinic any personal information you share with us through website, email, and social media, is handled securely and confidentially. This practice uses analytics and cookies.

The practice does not interact or communicate with patients digitally e.g. through social media or by email. A social media policy is in place at this practice. Please advise reception if you would like a copy.

Policy review statement

Our privacy policy is regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with current obligations.

If any changes are made:

- They will be reflected on the website.
- Significant changes may be communicated directly to patients via email or other means.

Please check the policy periodically for updates. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us.