

Coffs Harbour Women's Health Centre Privacy Policy



Current as of: 21/11/2024 (to be reviewed 21/11/2025)

Introduction

The objective of this privacy notice is to provide you, our patient, with clear information on how your personal information is collected and used within our practice. Occasionally we also need to share your information to involve others in your healthcare and this policy outlines when, how, and why we share your information.

Who can I contact about this policy?

For any enquiries concerning this policy, contact our practice by email whc@healthvoyage.org.au

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. Our practice will also obtain informed consent for real time audio/visual recording, duplication and storage of a consultation, including those via telehealth.

Only staff who need to see your personal information will have access to it. If we need to use your information for anything else, we will seek additional consent from you to do this. It is important to us that as our patient, you understand why we collect and use your personal information.

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

Our 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 a high-quality service to our patients. Our main purpose for collecting, using, holding and sharing your personal information is to manage your health.

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, and adverse reactions immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors
- Medicare number (where available) for identification and claiming purposes
- healthcare identifiers
- health fund details.

Can you deal 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 is personal information collected?

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. While providing medical services, further personal information may also be collected via electronic prescribing (e-scripts)

My Health Record e.g. via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary

CCTV footage: Collected from outside our premises for security and safety purposes only.

Photos and medical images: These can be taken using personal devices for medical purposes, following the guidelines outlined on using personal devices for medical purposes

3. We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email or
4. SMS, telephone us, make an online appointment or communicate with us using social media.
5. In some circumstances, personal information may also be collected from other sources including:
 - 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).

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 (only relevant medical information regarding treatment will be shared in referral letters and correspondence)
- when it is required or authorised by law (e.g. 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 it is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (e.g. 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 personal information will be able to do so. Other than providing medical services or as otherwise described in this policy, our practice will not share personal information with any third party without your consent.

Our practice 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?

Our 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?

Our practice may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services offered to patients through research, 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. The information is secure, patients cannot be identified, and the information is stored within Australia. You can let our reception staff know if you do not want your information included.

How are document automation technologies used?

Document automation is where systems use existing data to generate electronic documents relating to medical conditions and healthcare. Our practice uses document automation technologies to create documents such as referrals, which are sent to other healthcare providers. The documents contain only your relevant information. These document automation technologies are used through secure medical

software Health Link.

All users of the medical software have their own unique user credentials and passwords 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.

How is your personal information stored and protected?

Your personal information may be stored at our Centre in various forms:

- as paper records
- as electronic records
- as visual – x-rays, CT scans, videos and photos
- as audio recordings.

Our practice stores all personal information securely. All records are stored in electronic format, in password protected information systems, monitored and tested on a regular basis to ensure confidentiality. All Centre staff and contractors are required to sign a confidentiality agreement upon commencement of employment.

CCTV is only monitored for the purpose of security for the outside of the practice

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

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

Our practice acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. We require you to put this request in writing and our practice will respond within a reasonable time. Most requests are responded to within 14 days however we advise it may take up to 30 days. We do not charge fees for you to access your records, however a fee may be charged for complying with the request in line with Privacy legislation. If fees are applicable, we will advise at the time of our initial response to your request.

Our 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 our 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 Centre Manager, CHWHC, 45-53 Little Street, Coffs Harbour NSW or email whc@healthvoyage.org.au.

How can you lodge a privacy-related complaint, and how will the complaint be handled at our 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 our resolution procedure. Please contact the Centre by sending your complaint or concern to Centre Manager, CHWHC, PO Box 46 Coffs Harbour NSW 2450 or email jchakos@healthvoyage.org.au. We endeavor to respond to your correspondence within 14 days however, it may take up to 30 days in some instances.

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.

How is privacy on the website maintained?

At the Women's Health Centre any personal information you share with us through websites, email, and social media is handled securely and confidentially. This practice uses analytics and cookies.

Policy review statement

Our Privacy Policy is reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with current obligations.

If any changes are made, they will be reflected on the website.

For any Significant changes our practice may communicate directly to patients via email or other means.