

# Keeping your personal information private in our practice

The Australian Dental Association Inc acknowledges and thanks the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners for permitting the replication of this pamphlet for dental practitioners.



## Purpose

This pamphlet explains how personal information about you and your dental health is recorded and managed in our practice. We also have a written privacy policy describing how we manage personal information. You can receive a copy of our policy free of charge on request.

## Personal Information

The 'personal information' we collect includes your name, date of birth, address/es, contact details, Medicare number and health fund details. Health information may include details about your oral health and the dental treatments and services you have received. We may also collect information on your general health and medical history that may impact your dental health and treatment. Dental practitioners need information about your past and present dental and general health to provide you with high-quality care. Our practice follows federal and state privacy legislation, and the Australian Privacy Principles, which require that your personal information is kept private and secure.

## Your Dental Records

This practice takes steps to ensure that your records:

- Are accurate, complete, well-organised and legible
- Are up-to-date
- Contain enough information to allow another dental practitioner to care for you
- Contain a summary of your care
- Can be used to remind you, with your permission, to return for follow up, check-ups and reviews. If you are uncertain why information is being requested, please ask your dental practitioner or the practice staff.

If you wish to remain anonymous while accessing our services, please talk to the practice staff. Our practice is able to participate in the My Health Record (MHR) system.

If you have a MRH and wish to have this considered as part of your dental treatment, please let us know. If, at any time, there is any information associated with your treatment that you do not want included in your MHR, please advise your dental practitioner.

## Providing Your Information To Other Dental Practitioners

In this practice, it is normal for all dental practitioners to have access to your dental records and health information. If you have any concerns about this, please discuss them with your dental practitioner or practice staff. It is also important that other people involved in your care, such as dental specialists, are informed of the relevant parts of your dental and medical history, so they can provide the best care for you. Your dental practitioner will let you know when this is necessary.

## Providing Your Information To Others

Our practice respects your right to decide how your personal information is used or shared. Only people who need to be able to access your information will be able to do so. In addition to people involved in your dental care, we may disclose your information to:

- Government and regulatory bodies (e.g. Medicare)
- Your private health fund or other insurer to assist in claim processing for payment/reimbursement
- Your nominated relatives in an emergency
- Third parties who work with our practice for business purposes (for example, data storage)

We will not share your personal information with anyone else or another organisation unless:

- You have consented to this sharing, or
- We are legally obliged to disclose the information, in which case your dental practitioner will first discuss

with you the information that she or he is legally obliged to disclose, or

- There is an overriding public health and safety interest in the release of the information.

Your personal and health information will not ordinarily be sent overseas unless:

- You are informed and provide consent for this to occur, and
- The overseas country receiving the information has privacy laws that are very similar to the Australian Privacy Principles.

## Using Health Information For Quality Improvement And Research

This practice may use patient health information to assist in improving the quality of care we give to all our patients, by reviewing the treatments used in the practice. Your information held by the practice may be used in research projects to improve dental healthcare in the community; however, this information will not include data that can identify you. Information used for research, including the publication of research results, will not be in a form that would allow you to be identified, unless the research serves an important public interest. In such cases, identifiable medical records can be used for medical research without your consent under guidelines issued by the Australian Government. Before providing such identified information, your dental practitioner will discuss with you the information that she or he is obliged to disclose.

## Security Of Information In The Practice

Australian privacy legislation applies to all personal health information recorded in electronic and paper records. All records must be kept secure to protect against unauthorised access. This practice complies with these requirements to protect your information.

## Access To Your Health Information

You may ask practice staff about any aspect of your dental care, including the information contained in your record. You can request access to your dental record and any other information the practice records about you. Sharing information is important for good communication between you and practice staff. Your dental practitioner will be able to provide a full explanation of the dental record you are provided access to. Depending on what is involved, you may be asked to contribute to the cost of providing the information. This charge will not be excessive. We will not charge you for making a request to access your information.

## Accuracy Of Your Health Information

If you have any concerns regarding the accuracy of the information held by the practice, you should discuss these with practice staff. Inaccurate information can be corrected, or your concerns noted in your record. For legal reasons, original notes will be retained by the practice.

## Direct Marketing

This practice does not engage in direct marketing.

Resolving concerns regarding the privacy of your health information. If you have questions or a complaint about the privacy of your personal or health information, please speak to our practice staff. We take complaints and concerns about privacy very seriously and our privacy policy provides further details on how you can lodge a privacy-related complaint and how we will seek to resolve it. If you are unhappy with the way our practice has responded to a privacy-related complaint, you may contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). For further information visit [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au) or call the OAIC on 1300 363 992.

## Further information on privacy legislation is available from:

### Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

1300 363 992  
[www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)

### ACT Health Services Commissioner

02 6205 2222  
[www.hrc.act.gov.au/health](http://www.hrc.act.gov.au/health)

### Health and Community Services Complaints

Commissioner (HCSCC)  
South Australia -1800 232 007  
[www.hcsc.sa.gov.au](http://www.hcsc.sa.gov.au)

### Health and Disability Services Complaints Office

Western Australia -1800 813 583  
[www.hadsc.wa.gov.au/home/index.cfm](http://www.hadsc.wa.gov.au/home/index.cfm)