

PRIVACY POLICY

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. Our practice complies with the Privacy Act 1988 and the APPs adopted therein.

WHY AND WHEN IS YOUR CONSENT 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 need to use your information for anything else, we will seek additional consent from you to do this.

WHY DO WE COLLECT, USE, HOLD AND SHARE YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION?

Our practice will need to collect your personal information to provide healthcare services to you. Your medical file is handled with the utmost respect for your privacy. The file will be accessed by your medical practitioner, and where necessary by other practitioners in the practice. It will also be necessary for our staff to handle your file to address the administrative requirements of running a medical practice. We will treat your personal information as strictly private and confidential. We will only use or disclose it for purposes directly related to your care and treatment, or in ways that you would reasonably expect that we may use if for your ongoing care and treatment. For example, the disclosure of blood test results to your specialists or requests for x-rays. A very small number of Hunter New England employees will have access to our records for the purpose of providing integrated care. They will only access essential information of patients whom are being co-managed by both our services for the purpose of that management. These employees are bound by a confidentiality agreement.

We may disclose information about you to outside contractors to carry out activities on our behalf, such as an IT service provider, solicitor or debt collection agent. We impose security and confidentiality requirements on how they handle your personal information. Outside contractors are required not to use information about you for any purpose except for those activities we have asked them to perform.

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.

DO WE DEAL WITH PATIENTS 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 e.g. through electronic transfer of prescriptions (eTP), My Health Record Shared Health Summary or Event Summary.
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).

WHEN, WHY AND WITH WHOM DO WE SHARE YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION?

We sometimes share your personal information for primary or secondary purposes:

- with third parties who work with our practice for business purposes, such as accreditation agencies, Primary Health Networks or information technology providers – these third parties are required to comply with the Australian Privacy Principles and this policy. This information is de-identified wherever possible.
- with other healthcare providers
- 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 there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (eg some diseases require mandatory notification)
- during the course of providing medical services, through eTP, 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 providing medical services or as otherwise described in this policy, our 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.

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.

DO YOU SHARE DE-IDENTIFIED DATA?

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

DATA QUALITY

We will take reasonable steps to ensure that your personal information is accurate, complete, up to date and relevant. For this purpose our staff may ask you to confirm that your contact details are correct when you attend a consultation. We request that you let us know if any of the information we hold about you is incorrect or out of date.

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 (see details below).

ACCESS

You are entitled to request access to your medical records. Should you wish to access this information we request that you put your request in writing and we will respond to it within a reasonable time. We refer to our handout entitled “Accessing your medical record”. There may be a fee for the administrative costs of retrieving and providing you with copies of your medical records.

We may deny access to your medical records in certain circumstances permitted by law, for example, if disclosure may cause a serious threat to your health or safety. We will always tell you why access is denied and the options you have to respond to our decision.

COMPLAINTS

We take complaints and concerns regarding privacy seriously. If you have a complaint about the privacy of your personal information, we request that you contact us in writing (see details below). Upon receipt of a complaint we will consider the details and attempt to resolve it in accordance with our complaints handling procedures.

If you are dissatisfied with our handling of a complaint or the outcome you may contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). Generally the OAIC will require you to give them time to respond before they will investigate. For further information visit www.oaic.gov.au or call the OAIC on 1300 363 992.

PRIVACY POLICY – WEBSITE USERS

When you come to our website (www.rtfp.com.au) we may collect certain information such as browser type, operating system, website visited immediately before coming to our site, etc. This information is used in an aggregated manner to analyse how people use our site, such that we can improve our service.

We may from time to time use cookies on our website. Cookies are very small files which a website uses to identify you when you come back to the site and to store details about your use of the site. Cookies are not malicious programs that access or damage your computer. Most web browsers automatically accept cookies, but you can choose to reject cookies by changing your browser settings. However, this may prevent you from taking full advantage of our website. Our website may from time to time use cookies to analyse website traffic and help us provide a better website visitor experience.

Our site may from time to time have links to other websites not owned or controlled by us. These links are meant for your convenience only. Links to third party websites do not constitute sponsorship or endorsement or approval of these websites. Please be aware that Raymond Terrace Family Practice is not responsible for the privacy practices of other such websites. We encourage our users to be aware, when they leave our website, to read the privacy statements of each and every website that collects personal identifiable information.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I MAKE AN APPOINTMENT ONLINE USING HOTDOC?

Raymond Terrace Family Practice has an agreement with an external provider Hotdoc for the management of patient bookings. The patient application process does not have direct contact to our practice and only connects to Hotdoc's secure cloud servers. All communication between the Hotdoc cloud server and Raymond Terrace Family Practice is encrypted using 128bit SSL encryption. Hotdoc only handles data relating to the patient appointment and no other sensitive patient records are used or stored on the Hotdoc system. <http://www.hotdoc.com.au> provides the Terms of Service for the Hotdoc application.

CHANGES TO OUR PRIVACY POLICIES

From time to time, we may make changes to our privacy policies. This may be in relation to changes in the law, best practice or changes in our services. These changes will be reflected in this statement, so you should check here from time to time. Our privacy policy is available on our website and at our practice.

CONTACT

Please direct any queries, complaints, requests for access to medical records to:

Practice Manager

Raymond Terrace Family Practice

PO Box 4

Raymond Terrace NSW 2324