

Bridgetown Medical – Privacy Policy

1. Purpose and our commitment to privacy

Bridgetown Medical is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal and health information and managing it in accordance with applicable Australian privacy laws, the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs), relevant Western Australian legislation and RACGP privacy guidance. This policy explains how we collect, use, store and protect your information, and your rights in relation to that information.

A copy of our Privacy Policy is available from the practice free of charge or through our practice website.

2. What personal information do we collect?

Personal information is information that identifies you or could reasonably identify you.

Depending on your circumstances, we may collect:

- your name, date of birth and gender;
- address and contact details;
- Medicare number and healthcare identifiers;
- private health insurance details;
- emergency contact details;
- medical history and information about your current health;
- medications and allergies;
- information about investigations, diagnoses and treatment;
- information provided by other healthcare professionals;
- relevant family and social information;
- appointment, billing and payment information;
- other information reasonably necessary to provide healthcare and manage our practice.

We only collect information that is reasonably necessary for the purposes for which it is collected.

3. How do we collect your information?

We generally collect information directly from you when you:

- make an appointment;
- complete a patient registration form;
- attend the practice;
- speak with a doctor or other healthcare professional;
- use our website or online services; or
- communicate with us by telephone, email, SMS or other electronic means.

Where appropriate and permitted by law, we may also collect information from other sources, including:

- other healthcare providers involved in your care;
- hospitals, pathology and diagnostic imaging services;
- pharmacies;
- Medicare and other government agencies;
- private health insurers;
- carers, guardians or authorised representatives;
- other people or organisations where permitted or required by law.

We will generally seek your consent where required before collecting information from another source.

4. Why do we collect and use your information?

We collect and use your information primarily to:

- provide safe and appropriate healthcare;
- assess, diagnose and treat health conditions;
- communicate with you about your healthcare;
- arrange referrals, investigations and follow-up care;
- maintain accurate and complete medical records;
- coordinate your care with other healthcare providers;
- process Medicare, private health insurance and other healthcare claims;
- manage appointments, billing and practice administration;
- comply with legal and regulatory obligations;
- improve the quality and safety of our services; and
- undertake other activities permitted or required by law.

If we need to use your information for a purpose that would not reasonably be expected in connection with your healthcare or practice administration, we will generally seek your consent where required.

5. Your medical records

We take reasonable steps to ensure your medical records are:

- accurate, complete and legible;
- kept up to date;
- sufficiently detailed to support safe and effective healthcare;
- securely stored and protected from unauthorised access, use or disclosure; and
- managed in accordance with applicable privacy and health-record requirements.

Your medical record may include a summary of important health information and may be used to support appropriate reminders and follow-up care.

Medical records are legal and clinical records. Original clinical notes will generally be retained and will not simply be deleted or destroyed when information is corrected or a concern is raised.

6. Access to your medical information

You generally have the right to request access to the personal information we hold about you, including your medical record. To request access, please contact the practice.

We will consider your request in accordance with applicable privacy and health-record requirements. In some circumstances, access may be refused or limited where permitted or required by law, including where access could pose a serious threat to a person's life, health or safety or unreasonably affect another person's privacy.

Information relating to another person may need to be removed or withheld before access is provided.

Depending on the nature of the request and how information is provided, reasonable costs may apply where permitted by law. If access is refused or limited, we will provide an explanation where we are permitted to do so.

Your GP can help explain information contained in your medical record and answer questions about your health information.

7. Access by other GPs and healthcare professionals

Doctors and other authorised healthcare professionals involved in your care may need access to your medical record. At Bridgetown Medical, all GPs and practice nurses may access your information where this is necessary to provide or coordinate your healthcare or for other authorised practice purposes.

Relevant information may also be shared with healthcare providers involved in your treatment, including:

- specialists;
- hospitals;
- allied health professionals;
- pathology and diagnostic imaging providers;
- pharmacists; and
- other treating doctors and healthcare providers.

Where required, we will obtain your consent before sharing information.

We generally only disclose information that is reasonably necessary for the purpose for which it is being disclosed.

8. When may we disclose information without your consent?

Your information will not be disclosed unless there is a lawful basis to do so.

Depending on the circumstances, information may be disclosed without your consent where:

- disclosure is required or authorised by law;
- it is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to a person's life, health or safety;
- it is permitted for certain public health or safety purposes;
- it is necessary for Medicare or health insurance purposes;
- it is necessary for a purpose permitted under the Privacy Act or other applicable legislation;
- it is necessary for a court, tribunal or other lawful process; or
- another exception under applicable privacy legislation applies.

Where appropriate and lawful, we will discuss the disclosure with you before providing information.

Only information reasonably necessary for the relevant purpose will generally be disclosed.

9. My Health Record

Where applicable, your information may be uploaded to, accessed from or exchanged through **My Health Record**. Information will be managed in accordance with the My Health Records Act 2012, applicable privacy requirements and your My Health Record settings. Please speak with your GP or practice staff if you have questions about how your information is shared through My Health Record.

10. Electronic communication

We may communicate with you using telephone, SMS, email, online booking systems or other electronic communication methods. Electronic communications may carry privacy and security risks. We take reasonable steps to protect information sent electronically, but no electronic communication system can be guaranteed to be completely secure. We will take reasonable steps to ensure information is sent to the correct recipient. Please tell us if you have a preferred or more secure method of communication.

11. Third-party service providers

We may use external service providers to assist with practice operations, including providers of:

- practice management and clinical software;
- electronic prescribing and health information services;
- pathology and diagnostic services;
- appointment and communication systems;
- medical billing and payment services;
- information technology and data storage;
- document management; and
- other services necessary to operate the practice.

Where these providers handle personal information on our behalf, we take reasonable steps to ensure appropriate privacy and security arrangements are in place.

12. Quality improvement and research

We may use information contained in our records to review and improve the quality, safety and effectiveness of healthcare provided by the practice. Where practicable, information used for quality improvement will be de-identified or handled in a way that protects your privacy. Health information may also be used for approved research intended to improve healthcare. Where research involves your identifiable information, we will only use or disclose it with your consent or where otherwise permitted or required by law, including applicable research ethics and privacy requirements. Where possible, information used for research will be de-identified. If you are invited to participate in a research project, you will be provided with information about the project and any consent requirements before deciding whether to participate.

13. Security of your information and data breaches

We take reasonable steps to protect your personal and health information from:

- unauthorised access;
- loss;
- misuse;
- interference;
- unauthorised disclosure;
- alteration; and
- destruction.

Information may be held in electronic and/or paper records.

Security measures may include physical, technical and administrative safeguards, staff privacy training, access controls, secure systems and procedures for managing privacy incidents.

Access to personal information is restricted to people who need it for authorised purposes.

If we become aware of an eligible data breach involving your personal information, we will assess and manage the incident in accordance with applicable privacy laws, including the **Notifiable Data Breaches scheme** where applicable.

Where notification is legally required, we will notify affected individuals and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) as required.

14. Anonymity and pseudonyms

You may ask to interact with the practice anonymously or using a pseudonym where it is lawful and practicable to do so. However, there are circumstances where we may need to identify you, including where identification is necessary to:

- provide safe healthcare;
- maintain an accurate medical record;

- process Medicare or health insurance claims;
- meet legal requirements; or
- protect your health or safety or that of another person.

Please speak with practice staff if you have concerns about providing identifying information.

15. Direct marketing

Bridgetown Medical does **not** use your personal information for direct marketing. We will not use your health information to send promotional or marketing material without appropriate consent or another lawful basis.

16. Privacy complaints and concerns

We take concerns about the privacy, security, accuracy and handling of your personal information seriously.

If you have a concern about how your information has been collected, used, stored, disclosed, accessed or corrected, please contact:

Practice Manager

Bridgetown Medical

Address: 88 Steere Street, Bridgetown WA 6255

Postal: PO Box 700, Bridgetown WA 6255

Email: manager@bridgetownmedical.com.au

Phone: 08 9761 1222

We will investigate your complaint and respond in accordance with our privacy complaints procedure and applicable privacy laws.

If you are not satisfied with how we have handled your complaint, you may contact the **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)**.

Further information

If you have questions about this Privacy Policy or how Bridgetown Medical manages your personal information, please speak with your GP, Practice Manager or another member of our practice team.

Bridgetown Medical

Address: 88 Steere Street, Bridgetown WA 6255

Postal: PO Box 700, Bridgetown WA 6255

Phone: 08 9761 1222

Website: www.bridgetownmedical.com.au

Useful resources:

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)

www.oaic.gov.au

Australian Digital Health Agency / My Health Record

www.digitalhealth.gov.au

Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care

www.health.gov.au

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