



Forster Tuncurry Medical Centre Privacy Policy

Current as of: 18th October 2024

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 the practice. Occasionally we also need to share your personal information to involve others in your healthcare and this policy outlines when, how, and why we share your information.

Forster Tuncurry Medical Centre is committed to ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of your personal information.

1. Who can I contact about this policy?

For enquiries concerning this policy, please contact us on office@ftmc.com.au.

2. When and why is your consent necessary?

When you register as a patient of this practice, you provide consent for the GPs and practice staff to access and use your personal information to facilitate the delivery of healthcare. Access to your personal information is restricted to practice team members who require it for your care.

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

3. Why do we collect, use, store, 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.

4. What personal information is collected?

The type of personal information we collect about you will depend on who you are, the type of relationship you have with us and the nature of our interaction with you.

The information we may collect about you includes your:

- names, date of birth, addresses, contact details, gender identity, sex, ethnicity, preferred language, country of birth, religion
- medical information including medical history, medicines, allergies, and adverse reactions immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors
- Medicare details (where available) for identification and claiming purposes, health fund details, and payment details
- healthcare identifier numbers



- any information related to your employment

5. Can you deal with us anonymously?

You can 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.

6. How is personal information collected?

The practice may collect your personal information in several different ways:

When you make your first appointment, the practice team will collect your personal and demographic information via your registration.

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.

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 (if relevant).
- 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.

We will always comply with privacy obligations when collecting personal information from third-party sources. This includes ensuring transparency with patients, obtaining consent where necessary, maintaining data accuracy, securing the information, and using it only for specified purposes.



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

We may share your personal information:

- with third parties 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. referral letters)
- 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 (e.g. 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, the practice will not share personal information with any third party without your consent.

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

8. Will your information be used for marketing purposes?

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

9. How is your information used to improve services?

The 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 reception staff know if you do not want your information included.

10. How are document automation technologies used?

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

The practice uses document automation technologies to create documents such as referrals, which are sent to other healthcare providers. These documents contain only your relevant medical information.

These document automation technologies are used through secure medical software - Best Practice.

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](#).

11. How are Artificial Intelligence (AI) Scribes used?

The practice uses an AI scribe tool to support GPs taking 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 Lyrebird.

Lyrebird:

- Does not share information outside of Australia. All transcription, processing and storage all occurs on Australian servers.
- Destroys the audio file once the transcription is completed in real time – in no case is the audio stored on Lyrebird following a consult.
- 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.

12. How is your personal information stored and protected?

Your personal information may be stored in various forms.

- Paper records
- Electronic records
- Visual records (ie. X-rays, CT scans, or photos)

The practice stores all personal information securely.

We take this matter seriously and are committed to taking all reasonable steps to ensure the protection of your personal information. To assist us, please ensure that the information you provide us is accurate and up to date, and please let us when your personal information changes.



SECURITY

To protect your personal information from loss, unauthorised access, misuse or disclosure, we employ a range of technologies and practices including network firewalls, encryption, and access controls. Our information security processes are regularly reviewed to ensure they maintain an appropriate level of protection for your personal information.

Some examples include:

- Passwords and 2 factor authentication for all software log-ons.
- Confidentiality agreements with all staff members.
- Thorough shredding process for all paper records that include sensitive personal information. This significantly reduces the amount of paper records stored in the practice.
- High level tech support and information security

13. 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 and unless there is a reason under the Privacy Act or other relevant legislation to refuse or limit access, or if we reasonably believe that giving access may pose a serious threat to the safety, health or life to any individual, or if it may impact the privacy of other individuals.

To request access to your personal information please contact our main office at office@ftmc.com.au with a written request and our staff will be in touch.

The practice will respond to any requests to access or correct your personal information within 3-5 working days of receiving the request. Please be aware that as the patient you are responsible for any costs involved in the process..

The practice will take reasonable steps to correct your personal information where the information is not accurate or up to date. Sometimes, we will ask you to verify that your personal information held by the practice is correct and current. You may request we correct or update your information. To do this please contact us via email – office@ftmc.com.au.

14. 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. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with the resolution procedure.

If you wish to contact us about a privacy-related complaint, please email us on office@ftmc.com.au. We will endeavour to respond to your complaint within 3-5 working days upon receiving it.

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.

15. How is privacy on the website maintained?

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



Our website(s) and our email communications may contain links to third-party sites. We do not take any responsibility for these third-party websites or any of the content contained on these websites.

16. 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.
