

Privacy Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline how Red Hill Doctors Surgery (RHDS) complies with its confidentiality and privacy obligations. As an organisation, RHDS's principal concern is and always will be the privacy of patients who visit our practice. A high level of trust and confidentiality is required to ensure the confidence of all Health Practitioners' patients.

Patients will be assured that:

- their privacy will be protected when visiting this location,
- the information collected and retained in the records stored will be correct and up-to-date, and
- that they can access their information in consultation with your GP for review

Health information

RHDS recognises that the information collected is often of a highly sensitive nature and as an organisation we have adopted the highest privacy compliance standards relevant to RHDS to ensure personal information is protected.

For administrative and billing purposes, and to enable the patients to be attended to by other medical practitioners at RHDS, patient information is shared between the General Practitioners and other health providers at this location. Your GP may collect personal information regarding their patients (including health information) for the purpose of providing medical services and treatment.

Personal information collected will generally include:

- the patient's name, address, telephone number and Medicare number,
- current drugs or treatments used by the patient,
- previous/current medical history, including, where clinically relevant, a family medical history, and
- the name of any health service provider or medical specialist to whom the patient is referred, copies of any letters of referrals and copies of any reports back.

RHDS may access information:

- provided directly by the patient,
- provided on the patient's behalf with the patient's consent,
- from a health service provider who refers the patient to medical practitioners providing health care services to their patients from this location, or from health service providers to whom patients are referred.

Use or disclosure of personal information

Personal information collected and stored at this location may be used or disclosed:

- for the purpose advised to the patient at the time of collection of the information,
- as required for delivery of the health service to the patient by their GP,
- as required for the ordinary operation of our services (i.e. GPs' referring their patients to a medical specialist or other health service provider),
- as required under compulsion of law, or

- where there is a serious and imminent threat to an individual's life, health, or safety; or a serious threat to public health or public safety.
- Your GP and our staff may use or disclose personal information for quality assurance, training, billing, liaising with government offices regarding Medicare entitlements and payments and as may be required by the Practice insurers.

Accuracy of your information

Your GP and our staff are committed to ensuring your information is accurate and has processes in place to ensure that the accuracy of this information is maintained. If you believe that the personal information the held at this location about you is inaccurate, please inform our staff either by phone or email.

Security of information collected

Other than as described in this Policy or permitted under privacy principles, your GP and our staff uses reasonable endeavours to ensure that identifying health information is not disclosed to any person unnecessarily or irresponsibly.

Due to the sensitive nature of the information collected at this location, extra precautions are taken to ensure the security of that information. Information may be stored electronically and / or in hard copy form. All electronically stored files are password-protected on several levels, and regular backups of data are performed each day.

RHDS requires its employees to observe obligations of confidentiality in the course of their employment with all Reception and Nursing staff signing Confidentiality Agreements.

How long are medical records kept?

RHDS keeps health information for a minimum of 7 years from the date of last entry in the patient records unless the patient is / was a child in which case the record must be kept until the patient attains or would have attained 25 years of age.

Accessing your information

On request, you may have access to your medical record held at RHDS, except in circumstances where access may be denied under the 'Privacy Act' or other laws. For example, access can be denied by your GP when letting a patient see their records would pose a serious threat to the patient's life or health, or the life or health of someone else (such as a relative, the health service provider, staff or other patients).

The threat must be significant, for example where there is a serious risk the patient may cause self-harm or harm to another person if they saw the information. The threat can be a risk of danger to physical or mental health, but does not need to be imminent - it can be a serious threat that might occur sometime after access is granted.

Can I transfer my medical records to a new medical practitioner?

Patients have the right to see the medical practitioner of their choice and are free to leave a practice and attend another if they wish.

How do I arrange this?

There is a professional obligation for a medical practitioner to provide a new treating medical practitioner with all of the information that they need to take over their patient's care.

This is usually done by the patient completing a 'transfer of file' form on the new practitioner's letterhead and producing an original source of identification (if requested) for the receptionist to view and record in their clinical file.

When a patient requests that their health records be transferred to a medical practitioner outside RHDS, their medical practitioner has an obligation to provide a copy or summary of the patient health record in a timely manner to facilitate care of the patient.

For medico-legal reasons, the original record is the ownership of your GP and remains securely stored at this location. Your GP authorises release to your new medical practitioner of their notes and associated investigation results in either a complete or summary form (preferably electronic). If a summary of the patient's health record is provided to the new medical practitioner, a copy of the summary is kept on file for record purposes.

Can the doctor charge for the handing over of medical records?

Fees may be charged by your current medical practitioner to review your file, especially if the medical history is long and/or complex, to authorise release to the new practitioner. Fee will apply if your new medical practitioner is not registered to receive encrypted records via Medical Objects. This fee covers copying records authorised by your current GP and postage and handling for administrative staff involved in actioning this request.

Website privacy

RHDS's website may contain links to other sites. Please be aware that RHDS is not responsible for the privacy practices of any linked sites. We encourage users who leave our site to read the privacy statements of each and every linked website that they choose to visit. All links to external sites are provided for your convenience. The information, products and advertisements contained in the linked sites are neither approved nor endorsed by RHDS, and RHDS is not responsible for such information, products or advertisements.

Your privacy is important to us and we want you to feel comfortable visiting our website. Any personal information that patients give to us, including e-mail addresses, will be used only in the following ways:

- personal data given to us by you will be securely stored,
- we will not provide your personal data to any third party without your permission,
- we do not automatically collect your personal e-mail address simply because you visit our site,
- if we join with a third party to provide services and you sign up for those services, we will share your name and other contact information necessary for our partner to provide the services to you.

By using RHDS's website, you consent to the collection and use of your personal information as detailed in this Privacy Policy. We will post any changes to this Privacy Policy on our website so that you are kept up to date with the type of information we collect and the ways in which we use it.

Changes to the Privacy Policy

RHDS has the right to change the Privacy Policy at any time. If there are updates to RHDS's Privacy Policy, we will address the changes promptly and update the revised date of the document.

Obtaining further information

If patients require more information regarding RHDS, its services and facilities, they can:

- ask a staff member,
- access RHDS's website, or
- ask our staff for a copy of the RHDS 'Practice Information Sheet'

Contact information

If you have any queries regarding our Privacy Policy please contact:

The Privacy Officer/Practice Manager
Red Hill Doctors Surgery
PO BOX 330
Red Hill Qld 4059

Or by, visiting our website you can submit a compliment, complaint or suggestion at www.redhilldoctors.com.au via our contact us tab.

Disclaimer

While we make every effort to protect your privacy, we may need to disclose personal information when required by law where we have a good-faith belief that such action is necessary to comply with a current judicial proceeding, a court order or legal process served on our company or site.