

PRIVACY POLICY – FOR PATIENTS

St Peters Dental Clinic Privacy Policy – for Patients

Our commitment to privacy

Our practice is committed to safeguarding the personal information of patients and staff in line with our obligations under Commonwealth legislation (such as the *Privacy Act 1988*: see [Guide to health privacy - Home \(oaic.gov.au\)](#)) as well as adhering to guidelines set by industry regulatory bodies such as the Dental Board of Australia.

What information do we collect about patients and why?

Administrative data

Our practice collects administrative data for accounting purposes, including *name, phone number, contact address/billing address, private health care fund and number, Medicare number* (if required for government-sponsored programs), *financial records of accounts and payments* (kept for five years, as required by the Australian Taxation Office), *insurance claims records, work related injuries* (records kept for five years as required under WHS legislation), *complaints*.

Dental records

We keep detailed dental records including *drug sensitivities, diagnostic tests, examination history, treatment, advice, referrals, communications with laboratories and other practitioners, x-rays etc.* to help us provide appropriate ongoing care. We may obtain this information from other practitioners or we may share this information with other practitioners with your consent as part of this ongoing care. Personal details are verified regularly and treatment records are updated at every consultation. We may add a note to health records retrospectively but we do not change records. For a detailed list of documentation please ask for a copy of **Appendix 1**.

Who else may see the information?

We may use patient information to discuss treatment with other practitioners. We may use it in a de-identified form for academic purposes, or with insurance officers or lawyers where the treatment relates to an Insurance claim or complaint.

Health Identifiers

The practice will not adopt, use or disclose an identifier assigned by any government agency except health care identifiers for purposes permitted under the *Healthcare Identifiers Act (2010) (Cwth)*.

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Access and correction

Patients and staff may request access to their information or make changes to their information at any time except where we consider there is a sound reason under the Privacy Act or other legislation. We may charge to recover costs in providing access to electronic or paper records. We aim to use accurate, current and complete information and we will make reasonable attempts to correct inaccurate information or dispose of any unsolicited information or information no longer required.

Anonymity

You may provide a pseudonym for emergency treatment if it is paid in full at the time of treatment. However, anonymous treatment is not practical for ongoing care or if other practitioners or diagnostic records are required, or for Medicare funded/insurance-funded services. We may also refuse to provide anonymous treatment if it is impractical due to our legal requirements to report child abuse or to manage substance abuse.

How safe is your information?

Our practice takes all reasonable steps to protect your personal information from misuse, interference and loss and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. See our privacy policy in relation to IT and web site privacy in **Appendix 2**.

Complaints

If you have a complaint about the way in which your information is handled contact the Practice Privacy Officer Dr Jane Boroky. Contact the Privacy Commissioner if you are not satisfied with the response after 30 (thirty) days at [Privacy complaints | OAIC](#).

Please sign to agree to our privacy policy and to receive SMS messages with appointment reminders.

Patient Name _____ Signature _____

Date _____

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APPENDIX 1

Guidelines on Dental Clinical Records

Clinical records should include –

- i. Date of visit
- ii. Identifying details of the practitioner providing treatment
- iii. Information about the type of examination conducted
- iv. The presenting complaint
- v. Relevant history
- vi. Clinical findings and observations
- vii. Diagnosis
- viii. Treatment plans and alternatives
- ix. Consent of the patient, client or consumer
- x. All procedures conducted
- xi. Instrument batch tracking control identification where relevant
- xii. Medicines/drugs prescribed, administered or supplied or any other therapeutic agent used (name, quantity, dose, instructions)
- xiii. Details of advice provided
- xiv. Unusual sequence of treatment
- xv. Radiographs and other relevant diagnostic data (digital radiographs must be readily transferable and available in high definition)
- xvi. Other digital information including CAD-CAM restoration files
- xvii. Instructions to and communications with laboratories
- xviii. Referrals
- xix. Relevant communication with or about the patient
- xx. Details of anyone contributing to the dental record
- xxi. Estimates or quotations of fees
- xxii. Records of complaints should there be any.

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APPENDIX 2

IT and Web privacy

We are sometimes required to send clinical information about patients via email (for example, if you are referred to a medical or dental specialist for part of your treatment). We endeavour to ensure your information is protected at all times and manage our IT systems with appropriate processes and systems to ensure data is not lost. If we store data offsite (eg in Cloud facilities) we only use facilities that comply with the Australian Privacy Principles. We will not transfer personal information to anyone in a foreign country for any other reason without prior written consent. Please make sure to advise staff if you do not wish your records to be recorded, stored or transferred electronically.

Our Internet Service Provider (HCIT) records the following information for statistical purposes to help us improve our external communications: your server address; your domain or top level domain name (eg. practice.com, .gov, .au, etc); date and time of visit, pages accessed, documents downloaded; previous sites visited.

Our web site only uses session cookies and only during a search query of the web site. The session cookie is destroyed at the end of your browsing session and we do not keep any identifying information.

- a. Neither our practice nor the ISP identifies users of our website.
- b. We will only collect your email address if you send us a message or you provide us with your address. We will not share it or use it for any other purposes other than for which you have provided it. We will seek your consent if we would like to send you any information about the practice and you may opt out of receiving information from us.