Beerwah Surgery Privacy Policy

Current as of: 04/05/2025

Introduction

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.

Why and when your consent is 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, who require it for your care. 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, store and share your personal information?

Our 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 use your information for internal quality and safety improvement processes such as practice audits, accreditation purposes, and staff training to maintain high-quality service standards.

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.

Dealing with us 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.

[Note: The *Privacy Act* requires you to provide patients with the option of not identifying themselves, or of using a pseudonym, when dealing with you (APP 2) unless it is impracticable for you to do so. Information about this should appear in the practice privacy policy or collection notice.]

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 providing medical services, we may collect further personal information. Information may also be collected via My Health Record, e.g. Shared Health Summaries
3. We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email, telephone us, make an online appointment or electronic prescribing.
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).
- Photos and medical images, these can be taken using personal devices for medical purposes, following the guidelines outlined in our guide. Practitioners must obtain consent before taking a photo's and medical images. We always comply with privacy obligations when collecting personal information from third-party sources. This includes ensuring transparency with patients, obtaining necessary consents, maintaining data accuracy, securing the information, and using it only for specified purposes.

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

We sometimes share your personal information:

- with third parties who work with our practice 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. in 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 there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (e.g. some diseases require mandatory notification)
- during the course of providing medical services, My Health Record (e.g. via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).

- Only people who need to access your information will be able to do so. Other than in the course of 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.

Our Practice ensures that only the correct and relevant information is included in referral letters sent to third parties and relevant to patient care. Our software ensures that the correct fields are selected when referral letters are constructed. Doctors also review and remove any information that isn't relevant.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms. Beerwah Surgery has electronic records, some x-rays and CT scans.

Our practice stores all personal information securely. Beerwah Surgery stores our patient's electronic personal information by security passwords on all computers and laptops. These passwords are changed regularly.

Will your information be used for marketing purposes

Beerwah Surgery will not use your personal information for marketing and 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 the practice in writing.

How is your information used to improve services

Beerwah surgery 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. If we provide this information to other organisations patient's cannot be identified from the information we share, the information is secure and is stored within Australia. You can let reception staff know if you do not want your de-identified information included.

At times, general practices are approached by research teams to recruit eligible patients into specific studies which require access to identifiable information. You may be approached by a member of out practice team to participate in research. Researchers will not approach you directly without your express consent having been provided to the practice. If you provide consent, you would then receive specific information on the research project and how your personal health information will be used, at which point you can decide to participate or not participate in the research project.

How are document automation technologies used

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

Beerwah Surgery uses document automation technologies to create documents such as referrals, which are sent to other healthcare providers. Thes documents contain only your relevant information.

These document automation technologies are used through secure medical software Medical Objects.

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.

Beerwah Surgery complies with the Australian privacy legislation and APPs to protect your information.

All data electronic or paper are stored and managed in accordance with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

How are Artificial Intelligence (AI) Scribes used

Beerwah Surgery uses an AI scribe to support GPs notes during their consultations with you. The AI scribe uses an audio recording of your consultation to generate clinical notes for your health record. Beerwah Surgery's AI scribe service is Lyrebird. Patient consent is obtained before AI is used in consult.

- Does not share information outside of Australia
- Stores the audio file once the transcription is complete for 1 week then it is deleted.
- There is no identifying patient information stored with Lyrebird.

Beerwah Surgery will only use data from our digital scribe service to provide health care for you.

How is your personal information stored and protected

Your personal information may be stored in various forms, at Beerwah Surgery we have electronic records e.g. xrays, scans, verbal recordings

Beerwah Surgery stores all personal information securely. Each staff member has their own unique password and login details. Each staff member has signed a written and binding confidentiality agreement.

Beerwah Surgery's website does not use, store or hold any patient information.

How can you access and correct your personal information at our practice?

You have the right to request access to, and correction of, your personal information.

Our practice acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. We require you to put this request in writing and deliver the request in person or via email, and our practice will respond within a reasonable time. Beerwah Surgery considers 30 days to be a reasonable timeframe for a response, a $35 fee is charged for providing this information.

Our practice will take reasonable steps to correct your personal information where the information is not accurate or up to date. From time to time, we will ask you to verify that your personal information held by our practice is correct and current. You may also request that we correct or update your information, and you should make such requests in writing to Practice Manager, 6/72-74 Simpson Street, BEERWAH, 4519 or pm@beerwahsurgery.com.au

How can you lodge a privacy-related complaint, and how will the complaint be handled at our practice?

We take complaints and concerns regarding privacy seriously. You should express any privacy concerns you may have in writing. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure. Beerwah Surgery, 6/72-74 Simpson Street, BEERWAH, 4519. Email address is pm@beerwahsurgery.com.au. The practice phone number is: 07 5494 0400. The Practice Manager will endeavor to respond to any privacy related complaints either by phone or in writing within 30 days of receipt of the initial complaint.

You may also contact the 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

Policy review statement

This privacy policy will be reviewed every 12 months to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur. Patients will be notified of any changes via the practice brochure and amended policies in the waiting rooms.