

## PRIVACY POLICY

At Merthyr Medical Centre recognises your privacy is very important to you, and we are committed to protecting your personal information in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and in accordance with other applicable privacy laws.

### WHAT INFORMATION DO WE COLLECT AND WHY?

This general practice collects information from you for the primary purpose of providing quality health care. We require you to provide us with your personal details and a full medical history so that we may properly assess, diagnose and treat illnesses and medical conditions, ensuring we are proactive in your health care.

The information we collect may be collected by a number of different methods and examples may include: medical test results, notes from consultations, Medicare details, data collected from observations and conversations with you, and details obtained from other health care providers (e.g. specialist correspondence).

At all times we ensure your details are treated with the utmost confidentiality. Your records are very important and we will take all steps necessary to ensure they remain confidential including:

- ensuring that personal information we collect is accurate, up-to-date, complete and relevant, other than where it is only collected to provide advice in respect of a particular point in time, in which case we will seek to ensure it is accurate, complete and relevant as at that particular point in time;
- ensuring that personal information we use or disclose is accurate, up-to-date, complete and relevant, having regard to the purposes for which personal information is used or disclosed;
- protect personal information from misuse, interference and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure; and
- destroy or de-identify personal information which we no longer need for the purposes for which it was collected, except where it is necessary to retain it in order to maintain ongoing

### WHEN WOULD WE DISCLOSE THIS INFORMATION?

Your personal information will only be used for the purposes for which it was collected or as otherwise permitted by law, and we respect your right to determine how your information is used or disclosed.

The information we collect may be used or disclosed by the practice for the following purposes:

- Administrative purposes in the operation of our general practice.
- Billing purposes, including compliance with Medicare requirements.
- Follow-up reminder/recall notices for treatment and preventative healthcare, frequently issued by SMS.
- Disclosure to others involved in your health care, including treating doctors and specialists outside this medical practice. This may occur through referral to other doctors, or for medical tests and in the reports or results returned to us following the referrals.

- Accreditation and quality assurance activities to improve individual and community health care and practice management.
- For legal related disclosure as required by a court of law.
- For the purposes of research only where de-identified information is used.
- To allow medical students and staff to participate in medical training/teaching using only de-identified information.
- To comply with any legislative or regulatory requirements, e.g. notifiable diseases.
- For use when seeking treatment by other doctors in this practice.

Merthyr Medical Centre does not provide your personal information to other organisations for their direct marketing nor do we typically or routinely disclose personal information to overseas recipients.

## **YOUR RIGHTS**

You have the right to request access to personal information we hold about you at any time. To request access to your personal information, please contact the Practice Manager or reception staff for a *Request for Personal Health Information* form.

Where the person requesting access is an authorised representative of the person about whom the information relates (such as an attorney or guardian) we will ask the representative to provide evidence of their authority (such as a copy of an Enduring Power of Attorney) where we do not already hold that information.

We will respond to your request to access within a reasonable period however, prior to disclosing any such information it will be necessary for you to satisfactorily verify your identity. If we decline your request for access, we will tell you the reasons for declining your request and inform you of your right to make a complaint. We may recover reasonable charges to provide you with access.

There are exceptional circumstances where access to or correction of your personal information may be refused by us such as where access would be unlawful. We will advise you of such circumstances should a circumstance arise.

## **HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT ABOUT THE HANDLING OF YOUR INFORMATION**

We take reasonable steps to ensure that your personal information is accurate, up-to-date and complete. You can help us do this by letting us know if you notice errors or discrepancies in information we hold about you and also letting us know if any of your personal details change.

If you consider personal information we hold about you is inaccurate, out-of-date, incomplete or irrelevant, you have a right to request we correct the information. It is sometimes not possible for us to make changes to personal information we hold about you (such as your healthcare records). In that circumstance, you may be entitled to request that we associate a statement with your information and you may have a right to make a complaint.

You may contact the Practice Manager at any time if you have any questions or concerns about this Privacy Policy or about the way in which your personal information has been handled including the collection, use, disposal or destruction of your personal information.

In most cases, we will investigate and respond to a complaint within 30 days. If the matter is more complex or our investigation may take longer, we will let you know.

If you are not satisfied with our response to your complaint, you are entitled to make a complaint to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner. The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner can be contacted by telephone on 1300 363 992. Full contact details for the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner can be found online at [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au).