

Privacy Policy – Denmark Medical Centre

Introduction

Denmark Medical Centre respects your privacy and is committed to protecting your personal information that you provide to us. This statement explains our policies and practices regarding the use and disclosure of your personal information by Denmark Medical Centre. Please note that, Denmark Medical Centre reviews and updates this Privacy Policy from time to time as needed without notice. Therefore, you should review the terms of this policy periodically to make sure that you are aware of how Denmark Medical Centre collects and uses personal information.

Patients will be assured that:

- ❖ their privacy will be protected when visiting the Medical Centre,
- ❖ the information collected and retained in our records is correct and up-to-date, and
- ❖ that they can access their information for review.

Health information

Denmark Medical Centre recognises that the information we collect is often of a highly sensitive nature and as an organisation we have adopted the highest privacy compliance standards relevant to Denmark Medical Centre 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 Denmark Medical Centre, patient information is shared between the medical practitioners and other health providers at the practice. Denmark Medical Centre and the medical practitioners may collect personal information regarding patients (including health information) for the purpose of providing medical services and treatment.

What information is collected

Personal information collected will generally include:

- ❖ the patient's name, address, telephone number and Medicare number,
- ❖ current drugs or treatments used by the patient,
- ❖ current and previous 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.

Denmark Medical Centre 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 services at or from Denmark Medical Centre, or from health service providers to whom patients are referred.

We inform our patients about our practice's policies regarding the collection and management of their personal health information via:

- ❖ a notice on the power point display at reception.
- ❖ brochures in the waiting area.
- ❖ our patient information sheet.
- ❖ new patient forms – ‘Consent to share information’.
- ❖ verbally if appropriate.
- ❖ the practice website.

Use or disclosure of personal information

Personal information collected by Denmark Medical Centre 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,
- ❖ as required for the ordinary operation of our services (i.e. to refer the patient 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.
- ❖ Denmark Medical Centre 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 Medical Centre's insurers.
- ❖ written or implied consent from patients is obtained before disclosing personal health information to third parties.

Accuracy of your information

Denmark Medical Centre is 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 Denmark Medical Centre holds about you is inaccurate, please inform our staff when next attending the Centre.

The consequences of not providing all or part of the information requested

There may be serious repercussions if we do not know who you are, how to contact you or be able to contact you in a timely manner. Withholding personal health information from your GP or others involved in your health care may put your life or health at risk.

Security of information collected

Other than as described in this Policy or permitted under privacy principles, Denmark Medical Centre uses all reasonable endeavors to ensure that identifying health information is not disclosed to any person unnecessarily or irresponsibly.

Due to the sensitive nature of the information collected by the Medical Centre to provide its services, 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.

Denmark Medical Centre requires its employees to observe obligations of confidentiality in the course of their employment with all staff and contractors signing Confidentiality Agreements.

How long are medical records kept?

Denmark Medical Centre keeps health information for a minimum of 15 years from the date of last entry in the patient records unless the patient is / was a child in which case the record is 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 by Denmark Medical Centre, except in circumstances where access may be denied under the 'Privacy Act' or other laws. For example, access can be denied 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.

Information is usually available within 30 days of lodging a request. Charges may apply.

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

Patients have the right to attend a medical practitioner of their choice and are free to leave the 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 a patient's care.

This is usually done by the patient completing a 'transfer of file' request and producing an original source of identification for the receptionist to make a copy of.

When a patient requests that their health records be transferred to a medical practitioner outside Denmark Medical Centre, the 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, our practice retains the original record and provides the new medical practitioner with a summary or a copy. If a summary of the patient's health record is provided to the new medical practitioner, a copy of the summary should be kept on file for record purposes.

A patient can also have a copy of his/her medical records transferred to their new practice by completing and signing a written request at the new practice.

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

Some medical practitioners may charge a fee for handling and copying their records to cover the administrative costs involved. The previous medical practitioner may charge a fee for providing a summary, especially if a patient's medical history is long and/or complex. Denmark Medical Centre charges a fee to forward records to another practice.

Website privacy

Denmark Medical Centre web site provides links to other third party web sites. Even if the third party is affiliated with Denmark Medical Centre through a business partnership or otherwise, Denmark Medical Centre is not responsible for the privacy policies or practices or the content of such external links. These links are provided to you for convenience purposes only and you access them at your own risk.

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,
- ❖ if you view specific pages or download information from specific pages on our website, we will track and add the number of your visits to the aggregate number of visits by all users in order to better design our website,

By using Denmark Medical Centre'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

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

Obtaining further information

If patients require more information regarding Denmark Medical Centre, its services and facilities, they can:

- ❖ a notice on the power point display at reception.
- ❖ brochure/s in the waiting area.
- ❖ our patient information sheet.
- ❖ new patient forms – 'Consent to share information'.
- ❖ verbally if appropriate.
- ❖ the practice website.
- ❖ access Denmark Medical Centre's website, or
- ❖ take a copy of Denmark Medical Centre's Information Sheet' available at the reception desk.

Complaints

If you have any concern please contact our Privacy Officer.

Contact information

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

The Privacy Officer
Denmark Medical Centre
3 Mount Shadforth Rd
Denmark WA 6333
P: 08 9848 4111
F: 08 9848 2192

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.

Prior to a patient signing consent to the release of their health information patients are made aware they can request a full copy of our privacy policy and collection statement.

Patient consent for the transfer of health information to other providers or agencies is obtained on the first visit. A copy of our consent form can be found as part of the New Patient Form

Once signed this form is scanned into the patient's record and its completion noted.

Note: Consent for transfer of information differs from procedural consent.