

## Northern Ultrasound for Women - Privacy Policy

Dec 2021

### 1. Introduction

Our practice is committed to best practice in relation to the management of information we collect. Our practice has developed a policy to protect patient privacy in compliance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) ('the Privacy Act'). Our policy is to inform you of:

- the kinds of information that we collect and hold, which, as a medical practice, is likely to be 'health information' for the purposes of the Privacy Act;
- how we collect and hold personal information;
- the purposes for which we collect, hold, use and disclose personal information;
- how you may access your personal information and seek the correction of that information;
- how you may complain about a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles and how we will deal with such a complaint; and
- whether we are likely to disclose personal information to overseas recipients.

### 2. What kinds of personal information do we collect?

The type of information we may collect and hold includes:

- Your name, address, date of birth, email and contact details
- Your partner or support person's name and contact details
- Medicare number , DVA number and other government identifiers, although we will not use these for the purposes of identifying you in our practice
- Other health information about you, including:
  - notes of your symptoms or diagnosis and the treatment given to you
  - your specialist reports, scan and test results
  - your appointment and billing details
  - your prescriptions and other pharmaceutical purchases
  - your genetic information
  - your healthcare identifier
  - any other information about your gender, race, sexuality or religion, when collected by a health service provider.

Information we commonly collect about referring medical practitioners, practice managers and ancillary staff, may include but is not limited to:

- name, address, telephone numbers, fax/email address, and other contact details
- Medicare provider numbers

- area of specialisation
- service delivery preferences, referral patterns and fees paid by referred patients
- expressed wishes about the provision of health services.
- service improvement comments/preferences
- details of feedback, complaints, and suggestions.

### **3. How do we collect and hold personal information?**

When you register as a patient of our practice, you provide consent for our doctors and practice staff to access and use your personal information. This is so we can provide you with the best possible healthcare service. Only staff who need to see your personal information will have access to it. If we need to use your information for anything else, we will seek additional consent from you to do this.

We will generally collect personal information:

- from you directly when you provide your details to us. This might be via a face to face discussion, telephone conversation, registration form or online form
- from a person responsible for you
- from third parties where the Privacy Act or other law allows it - this may include, but is not limited to: other members of your treating team, diagnostic and laboratory centres, specialists, hospitals, the My Health Record system<sup>1</sup>, electronic prescription services, Medicare, your health insurer, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

### **4. Why do we collect, hold, use and disclose personal information?**

In general, we collect, hold, use and disclose your personal information for the following purposes:

- to provide health services to you
- to communicate with you in relation to the health service being provided to you
- to share scan images with you
- to comply with our legal obligations, including, but not limited to, mandatory notification of communicable diseases or mandatory reporting under applicable child protection legislation.
- to help us manage our accounts and administrative services, including billing, arrangements with health funds, pursuing unpaid accounts, management of our ITC systems
- for consultations with and providing results to other doctors and allied health professionals involved in your healthcare;
- to obtain, analyse and discuss test results from diagnostic and pathology laboratories
- for identification and insurance claiming

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://myhealthrecord.gov.au/internet/mhr/publishing.nsf/content/home>

- to a third party who works in conjunction with our practice for business purposes, such as accreditation agencies or information technology providers; where such third parties are also required to comply with APPs and this policy
- to liaise with your health fund, government and regulatory bodies such as Medicare, Defence Health Insurer, the Department of Veteran's Affairs and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) (if you make a privacy complaint to the OAIC), as necessary.

We do not use personal information for direct marketing. We will not sell, trade, disclose, or otherwise transfer your personal information to a third party for any marketing purposes.

## **5. How can you access and correct your personal information?**

You have a right to seek access to, and correction of the personal information which we hold about you. There is no fee for this service.

For details on how to access and correct your health record, please contact our practice as noted below under 'Contact Details'.

We will normally respond to your request within 30 days.

## **6. How do we hold your personal information?**

Our staff are trained and required to respect and protect your privacy. We take reasonable steps to protect information held from misuse and loss and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. We hold personal information in the following ways:

- electronic soft copies
- hard copies
- digital audio recordings
- digital and hard copy images (ultrasound scans, videos, and photos)
- paper based and other hard copy documents located securely within the practice
- contained in electronic records in a secure environment; and
- archived in dedicated secure storage facilities.

We ensure the following for electronic records:

- they are stored securely on our systems with access via a username and password to login, and are only be accessible by staff of the practice;
- backup tapes or other media are stored securely or destroyed;
- anti-virus software is present on all computers with automatic updates;
- confidential information is not sent by email unless encrypted;
- all emails will be sent with a confidentiality and privilege notice; and
- IT equipment will be stored in secure area of practice.

## 7. Privacy related questions and complaints

If you have any questions about privacy-related issues or wish to complain about a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles or the handling of your personal information by us, you may lodge your complaint in writing to (see below for details). We will normally respond to your request within 30 days.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you may refer the matter to the OAIC:

**Phone:** 1300 363 992

**Email:** [enquiries@oaic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@oaic.gov.au)

**Fax:** +61 2 9284 9666

**Post:** GPO Box 5218

Sydney NSW 2001

Website: <https://www.oaic.gov.au/individuals/how-do-i-make-a-privacy-complaint>

## 8. Anonymity and pseudonyms

The Privacy Act provides that individuals must have the option of not identifying themselves, or of using a pseudonym, when dealing with our practice, except in certain circumstances, such as where it is impracticable for us to deal with you if you have not identified yourself.

Individuals are entitled to approach us anonymously to discuss or to dispute our compliance with Australian Privacy Principles. Patients may approach us anonymously and request service; however, the service itself may not be able to be provided as personal information is relevant to extend the healthcare required.

It is impracticable for patients to receive healthcare from us anonymously or by using a pseudonym. This is because:

- diagnosis and advice will be significantly impaired
- there would be an unacceptable risk to patient safety
- there may be mismatching of that individual's results
- the disconnect between our practice and that patient's referring medical practitioner is unacceptable for patient care
- it may result in a breakdown of good health care practices including the inability to extend longitudinal studies where appropriate
- examination may not be claimed under Medicare or Private Health Funds.

## 9. Overseas disclosure.

We may disclose your personal information to the following overseas recipients:

- any practice or individual who assists us in providing services (such as where you have come from overseas and had your health record transferred from overseas or have treatment

continuing from an overseas provider or where we source an overseas diagnostic testing service)

- anyone else to whom you authorise us to disclose it.

## **10. Our website**

Our website may, at times, utilise “cookies” which allow us to monitor our web traffic. Generally, a cookie does not identify you personally but may identify your internet service provider and IP address. We extend the same privacy protection to personal information gathered from our website to that gathered from other sources.

Our website may, at times, contain links to other third party websites. Any access to and use of such websites is not governed by this Policy, but is governed by the privacy policies of those third party websites. We are not responsible for the information practices of third party websites.

## **11. Updates to this Policy**

This Policy will be reviewed from time to time to take account of new laws and technology, changes to our operations and other necessary developments. Updates will be publicised on the practice's website – [www.nuwomen.com.au](http://www.nuwomen.com.au) .

## **12. Contact details for privacy related issues**

Please address your correspondence to the attention of the Practice Manager and mark it “**private and confidential: privacy**”.

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