



Privacy Policy

Current as of: July 2026

This Practice 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.

Countryside Medical Centre will protect the privacy of personal information we collect, hold and administer and will do this in accordance with legislation and the Australian Privacy Principles.

Countryside Medical Centre recognises that the nature of these services can mean that some of the information we handle is sensitive. It is recognised that privacy principles protect personal information both as a matter of individual right, and to support the public interest.

Who can I contact about this policy?

For enquiries concerning this policy, you can contact the Practice Manager via phone on 03 5152 3331 or via email at reception@countrysidemc.au.

Why and when your consent is necessary

When you register as a patient of Countryside Medical Centre, 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. If we need to use your information for anything else, we will seek additional consent from you to do this.

It is important to us that as our patient, you understand why we collect and use your personal information. By acknowledging this Privacy Policy you consent to us collecting, holding, using, retaining and disclosing your personal information in the manners described below.

Why do we collect, use, hold and share your personal information?

Countryside Medical Centre will need to collect your personal information to provide healthcare services to you. Our main purpose for collecting, using, holding and sharing your personal information is to manage your health. We also use it for directly related business activities, such as financial claims and payments, practice audits and accreditation, and business processes (e.g. staff training).

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 identifier numbers
- 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.

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 the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information. Information can also be collected through electronic transfer of MyHealth Record (e.g. via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary), electronic prescribing, HotDoc online appointments, HealthLink, Medical Objects, SafeScript and Argus.
3. We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email or SMS, telephone us, make an online appointment, or communicate with us using social media.
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).
5. Various types of images may be collected and used, including:
 - *CCTV footage*: Collected from our premises for security and safety purposes
 - *Photos and medical images*: These can be taken using personal devices for medical purposes, following the guidelines outlined in our guide on using personal devices for medical images (see [RACGP - Using personal mobile devices for clinical photos in general practice](#)).

We will 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
- 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, through electronic prescribing, MyHealth Record (e.g. via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary), Hotdoc, HealthLink, Medical Objects, SafeScript and Argus.
- 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.

Countryside Medical Centre 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.

How is your information used to improve services?

Countryside Medical Centre 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, patients 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 our 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.

The practice uses document automation technologies to create documents such as referrals, which are sent to other healthcare providers. These documents contain only your relevant medical information.

These document automation technologies are used through secure medical software such as Best Practice Premier and HealthLink.

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.

The practice complies with the Australian privacy legislation and APPs to protect your information.

All data, both electronic and paper are stored and managed in accordance with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Privacy and managing health information guidance.

How are Artificial Intelligence (AI) Scribes used?

Many of the practitioners currently working at Countryside Medical Centre use an AI scribe tool to support GPs taking notes during their consultations with you. The AI scribe uses an audio recording of your consultation to generate a clinical note for your health record. The most commonly used AI scribe service used is Heidi ([Heidi Patient Experience | EN-AU](#)).

Heidi:

- does not share information outside of Australia
- destroys the audio file once the transcription is complete.
- removes sensitive, personal identifying information as part of the transcription

The practice will only use data from our digital scribe service to provide healthcare to you. You will be asked for verbal consent to use this AI scribe tool at the beginning of the consultation. You may withdraw your consent at any time.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our practice as an electronic health record, which includes X-rays, scans and in some instances photos.

Our practice stores all personal information securely. Our information systems are protected and backed-up, the practice team have signed confidentiality agreements and they use passwords and multi-factor authentication to access your information. Countryside Medical Centre CCTV recordings are stored securely and do not include audio. CCTV coverage is limited to areas in the practice that are publicly accessible; these exclude consultation and treatment rooms, but include car park, front and rear entry, waiting area, reception and main hallways.

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 via a letter sent to the **Countryside Medical Centre Practice Manager** and we will respond within 30 days. Please note that fees are associated with 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 the **Countryside Medical Centre Practice Manager** via reception@countrysidemc.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 Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Procedure.

You may also contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). Generally, the OAIC will require you to give them time to respond before they will investigate. For further information visit <https://www.oaic.gov.au/> or call the OAIC on 1300 363 992.

Alternatively, you can contact the Victorian Office of the Health Services Commissioner on 1300 582 113 or visit www.health.vic.gov.au

Privacy and our Website/Social Media

At Countryside Medical Centre, any personal information you share with us through website, email, and social media, is handled securely and confidentially. Countryside Medical Centre collects and uses your personal information via the contact form on the website, or via the booking link that connects to HotDoc online bookings. Countryside Medical Centre does not sell, rent or lease its customer lists to third parties. We do not use or disclose sensitive personal information, such as race, religion, or political affiliations, without your explicit consent. This practice uses analytics and cookies.

Policy Review Statement

Our privacy policy is regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with current obligations.

If any changes are made:

- They will be reflected on the website.
- Significant changes may be communicated directly to patients via email or other means.

Please check the policy periodically for updates. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us.

Additional Information

For more information on privacy visit the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner <https://www.oaic.gov.au/>

Definitions

Personal information - Information or an opinion (including information or an opinion forming part of a database), whether true or not, and whether recorded in a material form or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion.

Relevant Legislation

- Australian Privacy Principles 2014
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012
- Privacy Amendment (Notifiable Data Breaches) Act 2017
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014

Adapted from the RACGP Privacy Policy template July 2026