



PRIVACY POLICY

Privacy Policy – Bruce Sports Medicine is subject to the Privacy Act 1988. This document sets out our Privacy Policy. By attending this medical centre, you consent to your personal information being collected, stored, and used in accordance with this Privacy Policy.

Patient records – All patient records are the property of Bruce Sports Medicine (and not the property of either the patient or the health service provider). This requirement assists, if the need arises, other health service providers in the medical centre in continuing the management of a patient's needs.

Personal information – The 'personal information' we collect includes your name, date of birth, address, contact details, Medicare number and healthcare identifiers. Medical information may include medical history and any care you may need. GPs need information about your past and present health to provide you with high-quality care.

Our practice follows the guidelines of the RACGP's Handbook for the management of health information in general practice. The Handbook incorporates federal and state privacy legislation, and the Australian Privacy Principles, which requires that your personal information is kept private and secure.

Your medical records- This practice takes steps to ensure that your medical records:

- are accurate, complete, well-organised and legible.
- are up to date.
- contain enough information to allow another GP to care for you.
- contain a summary of your care.
- can be used to remind you, with your permission, to return for follow up, check-ups and reviews.

If you are uncertain why information is being requested, please ask your GP or the practice staff. If you wish to remain anonymous while accessing healthcare services, please talk to the practice staff.

Providing your information to other GPs- In this practice, it is normal for all GPs to have access to your medical records. If you have any concerns about this, please discuss them with your GP or practice staff. It is important that other people involved in your care, such as medical specialists and other healthcare professionals, are informed of the relevant parts of your medical history, so they can provide the best care for you. Your GP will let you know when this is necessary.

Providing your information to others- GPs respect your right to decide how your personal information is used or shared. For example, this may be sharing your health information with specialist doctors. Personal information that identifies you will only be sent to other people with your consent unless there are exceptional circumstances. Gaining your consent is the guiding principle used by this practice in using and sharing your information.

Our practice will not share your personal health information with anyone else or another organisation unless:

- you have consented to this sharing, or
- they are legally obliged to disclose the information, in which case your GP will first discuss with you the information that she or he is legally obliged to disclose, or
- the information is necessary for you to obtain Medicare payments or other health insurance rebates, or
- there is an overriding public health and safety interest in the release of the information.

In the above cases, only information necessary to meet the requirements will be provided. Your health information will not ordinarily be sent overseas unless:

- you are informed and provide consent for this to occur, and
- the overseas country receiving the information has privacy laws that are very similar to the Australian Privacy Principles.

Using health information for quality improvement and research- This practice may use patient health information to assist in improving the quality of care we give to all our patients, by reviewing the treatments used in the practice.

Your information held by the practice may be used in research projects to improve healthcare in the community; however, this information will not include data that can identify you.

The information used for research, including the publication of research results, will not be in a form that would allow you to be identified, unless the research serves an important public interest. In such cases, identifiable medical records can be used for medical research without your consent under guidelines issued by the Australian Government. Before providing such identified information, your GP will discuss with you the information that she or he is obliged to disclose.

Security of information in the practice- Australian privacy legislation applies to all personal health information recorded in electronic and paper records. All records must be kept secure to protect against unauthorised access. This practice complies with these requirements to protect your information.

Access to your health information- You may ask practice staff about any aspect of your healthcare, including information contained in your record. You can request access to your medical record and any other information the practice records about you.

If you request access to your medical record, your GP will need to consider if there may be a risk of physical or mental harm to you or any other person that may result from disclosure of your health information. Your GP may need to remove any information that will affect the privacy of other individuals.

Sharing information is important for good communication between you and practice staff. Your GP can provide a full explanation of the health summary or medical record you are provided access to. Depending on what is involved, you may be asked to contribute to the cost of providing the information.

Direct marketing- This practice does not engage in direct marketing.

Resolving concerns regarding the privacy of your health information- If you have any concerns regarding the privacy of your personal health information or the accuracy of the information held by the practice, you should discuss these with practice staff. Inaccurate information can be corrected, or your concerns noted in your record. For legal reasons, the original notes will be retained.

Third party requests for access to personal health information

Where our practice holds reports or other health information from another organisation, such as a medical specialist, we are required to provide access to this information in the same manner as for the records we create. We are also required to provide access to records which have been transferred to us from another health service provider.

General practice has a fundamental role in ensuring the privacy of personal patient health information. Our practice has access to and uses the RACGP's *Privacy and managing health information in general practice* handbook which aligns with current best practice and includes commentary on the *Privacy Act 1988*. It provides guidance to our practice on the management of health information in a general practice setting and includes examples of compliance with the various Health Records Acts and the *Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)*, which regulate the handling of personal information by both Australian government agencies and businesses.

Requests for access to patient health records and associated financial details may be received from various third parties including:

- Subpoena/court order/coroner/search warrant.
- Relatives/friends/carers
- External practitioners and healthcare institutions
- Police/solicitors
- Health insurance companies/workers compensation/social welfare agencies
- Employers
- Government agencies
- Accounts/debt collection
- Students (medical and nursing)
- Research/quality assurance programs.
- Media outlets
- International parties, and
- Disease registers.

We only transfer or release patient information to a third party once the consent to share information has been signed and, in specific cases, informed consent has been sought from the patient.

Our practice team can describe the procedures for timely, authorized and secure transfer of patient personal health information in relation to valid requests.

Request to access personal health information.

Patients of this practice have the right to access their personal (and health) information under legislation. The *Privacy Act 1988* and *Australian Privacy Principles* (APPs) govern health service providers' and other organisations' obligations to give patients access to their personal health information on request, subject to certain exceptions and the payment of fees (if any).

This practice complies with the *Privacy Act 1988* and APPs adopted therein. These regulations give patients the right to know what information a private sector organisation holds about them, the right to access this information, and to also make corrections if they consider any data is incorrect.

We have a privacy policy in place that sets out how to manage personal health information and the steps an individual must take to obtain access to this information. This includes the different forms of access and the applicable timeframes and fees.

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Privacy and our website

There are many aspects of the site which can be viewed without providing personal information, however, for the online appointment features you are required to submit personally identifiable information. This may include but not limited to your full name, date of birth and address or provide sensitive information in the recovery of your lost password.

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. Please address all complaints to:

The Practice Manager

Bruce Sports Medicine

9 Victoria Street HALL ACT 2617

Email: admin@brucesportsmedicine.com.au

You may also contact the OAIC. Generally, the OAIC will require you to give them time to respond before they will investigate.

Further information on privacy legislation is available from:

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

1300 363 992

www.oaic.gov.au

ACT Health Services Commissioner

02 6205 2222

www.hrc.act.gov.au/health