



COASTWIDE EYE SURGERY

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COASTWIDE EYE SURGERY PRIVACY POLICY

Introduction

This 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.

Coastwide Eye Surgery, Erina and Tuggerah, as a NSW Health Care Provider in the private sector, is bound by the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW) and the Privacy Act 1988, which includes both the Australian Privacy Principles and the NSW Health Privacy Principles. These principles set the standards by which we handle personal information collected from our patients.

A copy of the Australian Privacy Principles may be obtained from the website of The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner at www.aaic.gov.au.

Why and when your consent is necessary

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 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.

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

Our practice 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 (eg staff training).

What personal information do we collect?

Personal information that we commonly collect, hold, use and disclose may include your:

- Names, date of birth, addresses, contact details (including your preferred means of contact)
- Next of kin
- Medicare number, Pension/Health Care Card number, DVA and Health Fund number (where available) for identification and claiming purposes
- Healthcare identifiers

- Medical information including medical history, medications, allergies, social history, family history and risk factors
- Diagnostic reports, results and reports obtained during the course of your medical consultations; referrals and other relative documentation to and from other health professionals and health service providers

Dealing with us anonymously

If you would like to access any of our services on an anonymous basis or by using a pseudonym, you have the right to do so. However, we will require you to identify yourself if:

- we are required by law to deal with individuals who have identified themselves; or
- it is impracticable for us to deal with you if you do not identify yourself or elect to use a pseudonym.

Please be aware that your request to be anonymous or to use a pseudonym may affect our ability to provide you with the requested services.

How do we collect your personal information?

Our practice may collect your personal information in several different ways.

- Initially when you make your first appointment your personal information will be collected by telephone, email, facsimile, online appointment request via our website and patient registration form. Information may also be collected via referral received from your referring practitioner via telephone, email, facsimile or via our website
- During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information.
- My Health Record, eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary.

We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email or SMS and telephone us.

In some circumstances personal information may also be collected from other sources. 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).

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 our IT company, medical software provider, 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 (eg 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

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- 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 (eg some diseases require mandatory notification)
- during the course of providing medical services, through My Health Record (eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary)
- during the course of providing prescriptions through electronic prescribing

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.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms e.g. electronic records, visual records (X-rays, CT scans, videos and photos), and physical records.

Our practice stores all personal information securely and securely destroys hardcopy personal information via a secure and certified document shredding service.

Patient records are in electronic format, in protected information systems in a secured environment. All staff, clinicians and contractors are required to use individual passwords and must sign confidentiality agreements.

We have a professional IT company tasked with ensuring the integrity and security of our IT systems.

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.

If you wish to access your Personal Information, we refer you to our handout titled ACCESSING YOUR MEDICAL RECORDS which is kept at reception. This handout is also available on our website, www.coastwideeyesurgery.com.au. As suggested by the Privacy Act we will respond to your request within 30 days.

In order to protect your Personal Information, we may require identification from you before releasing the requested information.

Practices are not required to provide access if they reasonably believe:

- it may threaten your or someone else's life, health or safety
- it may impact someone else's privacy
- giving access would be unlawful

Refusal to grant access will be communicated in writing with the reasons and the process for lodging a complaint. You will be given an explanation in these circumstances. If you request access to your

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medical record, the practice will be entitled to charge fees to cover time and administrative costs which may not be covered by a Medicare rebate.

Our practice will take reasonable steps to correct your personal information where the information is not accurate or up to date. At each appointment and 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 Business Manager Email: mail@coastwideeyesurgery.com.au

If your personal information changes please notify reception via telephone or in person as soon as possible.

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 attempt to resolve it within 30 days. Please direct complaints or concerns in writing to the Business Manager Email: mail@coastwideeyesurgery.com.au. You must include your mailing address and contact number.

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

Policy review statement

This privacy policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur. Patients will be notified of amendments via our Website.