



# Personal Information, Privacy and your doctor

## **Aim**

This leaflet aims to explain clearly how personal information about you and your health is recorded and managed within the Tristar Medical Group ("Tristar"). Your doctor will be happy to discuss this with you.

## **Your Personal Health Information**

Your doctor needs information about your past and present health in order to provide you with high quality care. This practice will make sure that you are able to discuss your health with your doctor in private.

Information is called "personal health information" if it concerns your health, medical history or past or future medical care and if someone reading it would be able to identify you.

This practice follows the guidelines of the "Handbook for the Management of Health Information in Private Medical Practice". The Handbook was produced by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Committee of Presidents of Medical Colleges with the support of the General Practice Computing Group. The 'personal information' we collect is your name, date of birth, address/es, contact details, Medicare card, healthcare identifiers, and health fund details. Medical information may include medical history and any care you may need.

## **Your Medical Records**

Your doctor will do his/her best to make sure that your medical records:

- are accurate, comprehensive, well-organised and legible;
- are up to date;
- have enough information to allow another doctor to care for you;
- do not contain offensive or irrelevant comments about you;
- contain a summary of your care; and
- Can be used to remind you, with your permission, to return for follow up, check-ups and reviews.

Your doctor will only collect information which is relevant to your medical care. If you are uncertain as to why information is being requested, ask your doctor.

If you want access to health care and maintain your anonymity, ask your doctor.

## **Providing your information to other doctors**

The doctor(s) at Tristar respect your right to decide how your personal health information is used or disclosed (for example to other doctors). In all but exceptional circumstances, personal information that identifies you will be sent to other people only with your consent. Gaining your consent is the guiding principle.

At Tristar, it is customary for all doctors to have access to all the medical records. If you have any concerns about other doctors at this practice being able to see your records discuss your concerns with your doctor. It is important that other people involved in your care, such as other doctors or health professionals, are informed of relevant parts of your medical history so they can best care for you. Your doctor will let you know before this occurs. If you have any concerns about this discuss them with your doctor. All employees of Tristar are bound by confidentiality agreements.

## **Providing your information to others**

- Your doctor will not disclose your personal health information to a third party unless:
- you have consented to the disclosure: or
- this disclosure is necessary because you are at risk of harm without treatment and you are unable to give consent - for example you might be unconscious after an accident; or
- your doctor is legally obliged to disclose the information (e.g., notification of certain infectious diseases or suspected child abuse, or a subpoena or court order); or
- the information is necessary 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**

All your medical records at Tristar are kept in electronic form. We will ensure that any of your personal information that is put on computer will be kept private in the same way as occurs with paper records. This will protect your record from unauthorised access.

### **Your access to your health information**

You have access to the information contained in your medical record. You may ask your doctor about any aspect of your health care including information in your record. We believe that sharing information is important for good communication between you and your doctor and for good health care.

Information in your record can be provided to you in a number of ways if for example, you are moving away and are transferring to a new doctor. Do not hesitate to ask your doctor if you want a summary of your care for any reason. If you request a summary or direct access to your full medical record, your doctor will need to consider the risk of any physical or mental harm to you or any other person which may result from disclosure of your health information and may need to remove any information that may impact on the privacy of other individuals. Your doctor will be pleased to provide a full explanation of the health summary or medical record provided. Depending on what is involved, you may be asked to contribute to the cost of providing the information.

### **Digital Marketing**

Tristar Medical Group does not engage in digital marketing

### **Resolving your concerns regarding the privacy of your health information**

If you have any concerns regarding the privacy of your health information or regarding the accuracy of the information held by the practice, you should discuss these with your doctor. Inaccurate information will be corrected or your concerns noted in the records. For legal reasons, the original notes cannot be altered and must be retained.

### **Further information on Privacy Legislation is available from:**

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner  
1300 363 992 [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)

ACT Health Services Commissioner  
02 6205 2222 [www.hrc.act.gov.au/health](http://www.hrc.act.gov.au/health)

Information and Privacy Commission  
New South Wales - 1800 472 679  
[www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/privacy/ipc\\_index.html](http://www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/privacy/ipc_index.html)

Office of the Health Services Commissioner  
Victoria - 1300 582 113  
[www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc/index.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc/index.htm)

Office of the Information Commissioner  
Northern Territory - 1800 005 610  
<https://infocomm.nt.gov.au>

Office of the Information Commissioner  
Queensland - 07 3234 7373  
[www.oic.qld.gov.au](http://www.oic.qld.gov.au)

Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner (HCSCC)  
South Australia - 08 8226 8666  
[www.hcsc.sa.gov.au](http://www.hcsc.sa.gov.au)

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