

# Neal Street Medical Clinic Privacy Policy

Neal Street Medical Clinic takes privacy issues seriously. We are firmly committed to maintaining your privacy in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles for the Fair Handling of Personal Information in the Commonwealth Privacy Act (1988) and Enhanced Privacy Protection Amendment (2012) as well as the Victorian Health Records Act (2002). This document comprises the Neal Street Medical Clinic Privacy Policy and sets out our policy in relation to privacy issues.

When you register as a patient of our practice, or otherwise provide personal information to us, you provide consent for our GPs and practice staff to access and use your personal information in accordance with the Privacy Policy. The Policy provides information to you, our patient, on how your personal information is collected and used within our practice, and the circumstances in which we may share it with third parties.

All patients who attend Neal Street Medical Clinic for the first time will be offered a copy of the Policy, which is readily available at any stage during the course of care at our clinic. The Policy is also available via our website [www.nealstmc.com.au](http://www.nealstmc.com.au)

The Policy set out below outlines:

- Why information about you is collected.
- What type of information is collected?
- How personal information is collected.
- How personal information is accessed.
- The measures taken by Neal Street Medical Clinic to ensure confidentiality, security and accuracy of the information collected.
- The strict circumstances in which disclosure of information may be warranted.
- The process for transferring your information from Neal Street Medical Clinic to a new health service provider.
- How to access your health record.
- Privacy related to the Neal Street Medical Clinic website.
- How to contact the Neal Street Medical Clinic Privacy Officer.

## Why personal information about you is collected

The primary purpose of Neal Street Medical Clinic collecting, using, holding and sharing your personal information is to provide high quality health care and manage your health needs. This information allows Neal Street Medical Clinic clinical staff to properly assess, diagnose, treat and be proactive in your health care needs. It also allows us to contact you in regard to your appointments and care.

We also use personal information for directly related business purposes, such as administrative and billing purposes, to enable you to be identified and contacted by our staff, for practice audits and accreditation, and business processes such as staff training.

## What type of personal information is collected?

Personal information collected by Neal Street Medical Clinic about you includes personal health information. Personal health information is information concerning your health, medical history, or past and present medical care and treatment, including:

- Names, date of birth, addresses, contact details, and details of relationships with other persons such as family members or guardians;
- Medical information including medical history, medications, allergies, adverse events, immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors;
- Details of other health care providers involved in your care and copies of any referral letters and/or medical reports and test results; and
- Medicare number, healthcare identifiers and health fund details.

## **How personal information is collected**

Our practice will collect personal information from you:

- When you make your first appointment at our practice and complete our new patient registration form;
- During the course of providing medical services;
- When you access the clinic website or other social media sites associated with Neal Street Medical Clinic;
- When you communicate with us by letter, telephone, SMS, email or other electronic means; and
- When you utilise any on-line system that facilitates the booking of an appointment at Neal Street Medical Clinic, making a script request or the provision of results.

In some circumstances personal information may also be collected from other sources. This is usually in circumstances where it is not practical or reasonable to collect it from you directly, including obtaining information from:

- A guardian or responsible person;
- Other involved healthcare providers, such as specialists, allied health professionals, hospitals, community health services and pathology and diagnostic imaging services; and
- Your health fund, Medicare or other government departments or authorities.

## **Confidentiality, security and accuracy of information collected**

All health service providers and other staff at Neal Street Medical Clinic are obliged to maintain the confidentiality of the information you provide and to ensure that personal information is not disclosed unnecessarily or irresponsibly.

Due to the sensitive nature of the information that you provide, precautions are taken to safeguard and secure the information we collect. Your information will be stored electronically with passwords that are protected to restrict unauthorised access and backups of data are performed regularly.

All patient files are the property of Neal Street Medical Clinic and all employed health service providers and administrative staff have access to your records for the purposes

specified above. Administrative staff will limit their access to your personal health information to the minimum necessary to perform their duties.

Neal Street Medical Clinic keeps patient health information files for a minimum of 7 years from the date of last entry in the file unless the patient is/was a child, in which case the record must be kept until the patient attains or would have attained 25 years of age.

Neal Street Medical Clinic is committed to ensuring that patient information is accurate and up to date. We ask that you inform us of any changes as they arise.

## **Disclosure of personal information**

There are situations in which we will sometimes need to share your personal information with third parties:

- For business purposes, such as accreditation agencies or information technology providers;
- When communicating with other healthcare providers involved in your care;
- When it is required by law;
- 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 when it is impractical to obtain the patient's consent;
- To assist in locating a missing person;
- To establish, exercise or defend a legal claim or complaint;
- For the purpose of a dispute resolution process;
- When there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (for example, mandatory notification of some diseases);
- During the course of providing medical services, through electronic transfer of prescriptions or health records, such as the My Health Record;
- When the information is necessary to obtain Medicare payments or other health insurance rebates.

Other than in the course of providing medical services or as otherwise described above, Neal Street Medical Clinic will not disclose personal information about you to a third party without your consent. Neal Street Medical Clinic health service providers and administrative staff will only disclose to third parties the minimum information that is required.

## **Transferring personal and health information**

You may request access to the information Neal Street Medical Clinic holds about you. The procedure for gaining access to your Neal Street Medical Clinic health record is as follows:

- A written request must be made detailing what information you require access to, including the person to whom the information has been provided and when.
- We will acknowledge your request within 14 days and providing we have the information you request, access should usually be granted within the 14 days. We will inform you if this timeframe is not achievable;
- You will be asked to verify your identify;
- An administrative fee will apply for all medical records that require more than just a basic health summary;

- Depending on the circumstances, you may be forwarded the information by mail, email or personally given access to inspect the information.

In some circumstances, Neal Street Medical Clinic may not be in a position to provide access to your health record as per the Privacy Act or other laws. Such circumstances include where:

- Access would create a serious threat to your physical and/or emotional health and safety or to the physical and/or emotional health and safety of others;
- Providing access will have an unreasonable impact on the privacy of other individuals;
- Denying access is required or authorised by law;
- Legal proceedings have commenced.

If access to your health record is denied, a reason will be provided in writing.

### **Privacy related to the Neal Street Medical Clinic website**

The Neal Street Medical Clinic website: [www.nealstmc.com.au](http://www.nealstmc.com.au) and other social media sites affiliated with Neal Street Medical Clinic may contain links to other websites. Please note that Neal Street Medical Clinic is not responsible for the privacy practices of any linked websites. We encourage all users of the Neal Street Medical Clinic website to read the privacy statements of all linked websites that are visited. All links to external websites are provided for your convenience. Neal Street Medical Clinic does not endorse the information, products and advertisements contained in the linked sites, and is in no way responsible for the content of such sites.

By using the Neal Street Medical Clinic website in this way, you consent to the collection and use of your personal information as detailed in this Policy.

### **Neal Street Medical Clinic Privacy Officer contact details:**

We take complaints and concerns regarding privacy seriously. You should express any privacy concerns you have in writing. We will then attempt to resolve the issue with you.

Neal Street Medical Clinic has a designated Privacy Officer who is available to address any concerns, questions or feedback you may have regarding our Privacy Policy.

The Neal Street Medical Clinic Privacy Officer may be contacted using the details below.

**Contact Name:** Elise Sloss

**Email:** [elise@nealstmc.com.au](mailto:elise@nealstmc.com.au)

**Mail:**

Neal Street Medical Clinic  
Locked bag 2228  
Gisborne, Vic, 3437

If you are unsatisfied with our response you may contact the office of the Australian Information Commissioner on 1300 363 992.