

Medsana Medical Clinic's Email Communications Policy

Current as of: 19/06/2020

Introduction

This email policy is to provide information on how we manage our privacy and security via email communications. This email policy is adapted from and in accordance with RACGP 5th Edition standards and AHPRA guidelines.

General practices are increasingly receiving requests from patients, other clinicians and third parties for health information to be sent to them electronically because it is an easily accessible method of communicating. The Australian Privacy Principles published by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner state that: "Health information is regarded as one of the most sensitive types of personal information."

For more information on Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act) and all amendments made to the Federal Legislation, please go to:

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A03712>

Policy

Our practice considers our obligations and takes all reasonable steps to protect the information and privacy of our patients. Under the Privacy Act, our practice is obligated to ensure the privacy of all patient information, including all electronic correspondence concerning or regarding our patient's personal and health information. Failure to take reasonable steps to protect this information may result in a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles. The extent of the reasonable steps taken depends largely on the nature of the information and the potential harm that could arise if unauthorised personnel gain access to it. All email communications to, from and between our practice, and/or to, from and between our practice and third-party companies/organisations regarding our patients, are treated as confidential and all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the security and safety of this correspondence.

Email configuration

Our practice takes every effort to keep patient information safe, communication of patient information via email can potentially be compromised so this is done at the risk of the patient. All clinical information regarding our patients is sent as a two-step authorisation to gain access. The information is encrypted with a password protection before being emailed. The password protected attachment is then sent via email to the email address supplied by the patient or third-party receiver. To obtain the password to gain access to the attachment, the receiver must call our practice and confirm their identity before receiving access.

Protection against spam

Our practice uses anti-virus and anti-malware software to protect all aspects of our computer and server systems. This includes screening/blocking all emails for viruses and fraudulent emails. Our practice holds the right to screen all patient correspondence via email for the above security issues.

Email disclaimer

The practice uses an email disclaimer notice on outgoing emails that are affiliated with the practice stating:

“NOTICE: - This email and any attachments may contain confidential, privileged and/or copyright information that is only for the use of the intended recipient. If you received it in error, please immediately notify the sender, and destroy this email and any attachments, and do not in any way make use of its contents (which includes any copying, reading, reliance, storage, transmission, dissemination or disclosure). Unauthorised use of this email is not permitted. Freeway Family Doctors PTY LTD ABN 89426321261”

Our practice also has an automatic response to all emails received.

“Thank you for contacting Medsana Medical Clinic. This inbox is monitored by reception staff regularly, however, if you are contacting Medsana Medical Clinic regarding an urgent matter or to obtain medical advice, please call the clinic on 07 3852 4878. While every effort will be made to keep your information secure, electronic communications can potentially be compromised, so this is done at your own risk. Thank you”

Email correspondence

Email correspondence sent to our website/email address are retained as required by the Public Records Act 2002 and other relevant legislation. Email messages may also be monitored by our information technology staff for system trouble-shooting and maintenance purpose. Your email address details will not be added to a mailing list (unless you so request) or disclosed to a third party unless required by law.

Policy review statement

This privacy policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur.