



Illawarra Family Medical Centre

Illawarra family Medical Centre Privacy Policy for Patients

Current as of: March 2026

Introduction

Our practice is committed to protecting your privacy and confidentiality. The purpose of this document is to provide you, our patient, with clear information on how your personal information is collected and used within the practice. Occasionally we also need to share your personal information to others involved in your healthcare and this policy outlines when, how, and why we share your information.

Who can I contact about this policy?

For enquiries concerning this policy, you can contact Suzi Dugandzija, Operations Manager

Address: IFMC 338-340 Crown Street Wollongong NSW 2500

Phone: 02 4252 5200

Email: ifmc@ifmc.net.au

Fax: 4225 9168

When and why is your consent necessary?

When you register as a patient of this practice, you provide consent for the GPs and practice staff to access and use your personal information to facilitate the delivery of healthcare. Access to your personal information is restricted to practice team members who require it for your care. If we ever use your personal information for purposes other than outlined in this document, we will obtain additional consent from you.

It is important to us that as our patient, you understand why we collect and use your personal information.

What personal information is collected?

The information we will collect about you includes your:

- Personal details (name, date of birth, address, phone number, email)
- Medicare number, DVA number and health fund details
- Medical history and family history

- Clinical notes and treatment records
- Allergies, medications and immunisation records
- Pathology and diagnostic imaging results
- Specialist reports and hospital discharge summaries
- Billing and payment information
- Emergency contact and next of kin details
- Ethnicity or cultural background

Where relevant, we may also collect sensitive information such as:

- Sexual orientation
- Religious beliefs
- Genetic information

Why We Collect and Use Information

We collect and use your information to:

- Provide healthcare services
- Maintain accurate medical records
- Communicate with you regarding appointments and results
- Refer you to specialists and allied health providers
- Obtain pathology and imaging services
- Comply with legal and regulatory obligations
- Process billing and Medicare claims
- Conduct quality improvement and accreditation activities
- Additionally, we may utilise your information for internal quality and safety improvement processes such as practice audits, accreditation purposes, and staff training to maintain high-quality service standards.

We only use your information for purposes directly related to your healthcare unless otherwise permitted or required by law.

How We Collect Information

The practice may collect your personal information in several different ways including:

- Directly from patients
- During consultations
- Through registration and consent forms

- Other involved healthcare providers, such as specialists, allied health professionals, hospitals, community health services, and pathology and diagnostic imaging services.
- Via My Health Record (where applicable)
- Through electronic communications, telephone calls and online bookings
- From carers, guardians or authorised representatives

Where practical, we collect information directly from you.

Disclosure of Information

We may disclose your information to:

- Treating doctors, specialists and allied health providers (e.g. In referral letters)
- Pathology and radiology services
- Hospitals and community health services
- Medicare, private health insurers and government agencies such as DVA
- Accreditation bodies and medical indemnity insurers
- Third-party service providers supporting practice operations
- when it is required or authorised by law (e.g. 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

We will always comply with privacy obligations when collecting personal information from third party sources. This will include transparency with you as a patient, obtain consent, maintain data accuracy, secure information and ensure we use the information for the specified purposes.

IFMC utilises document automation technologies (templates) so that documents such as referrals contain only relevant medical information. All referrals are reviewed by the referring doctor before being sent.

We do not share your personal information with anyone outside Australia (unless under exceptional circumstances that are permitted by law) without your consent.

Data Security and Storage

We take reasonable steps to protect your information from misuse, interference, loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

Our security measures include:

- Secure electronic medical record systems

- Password protection and access controls
- Staff confidentiality agreements
- Antivirus and cybersecurity protections
- Regular data backups
- Secure storage of paper records – all results received in paper format are scanned into your electronic file
- Staff contractors such as cleaners are required to sign confidentiality agreements
- 2 factor authentication for email, secure cabinets.

All staff receive training regarding privacy and confidentiality obligations.

Data Breaches

If a data breach occurs, we will:

- Assess and contain the breach
- Notify affected individuals where required
- Notify the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) where applicable

Use of AI Scribes

Some doctors practicing from IFMC choose to use an AI scribe tool during their patient consultations to Assist with note taking. These tools use an audio recording to generate a clinical note. The audio recording does not share information outside of Australia and is destroyed when the transcription is complete. Individual doctors using this tool will give each patient the option to opt out of using AI scribe before the consultation begins.

Electronic Communication Policy

Our practice is mindful of obtaining consent prior to engaging in electronic communication including email and sms.

Can you deal with us anonymously?

You can deal with us anonymously or under a pseudonym unless it is impracticable for us to do so or unless we are required or authorised by law to only deal with identified individuals.

Will your information be used for marketing purposes?

Our practice will not use your information for marketing any of our goods or services directly to you without your express consent. If you do consent, you can opt out at any time by notifying our practice in writing.

How is your information used to improve services?

The practice may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services offered to patients through research, analysis of patient data for quality improvement and for training activities with the practice team

We may provide de-identified data to other organisations to improve population health outcomes. The information is secure and patients cannot be identified. The information is stored within Australia. You can let reception staff know if you do not want your de-identified information included.

How is privacy on the website maintained?

We endeavour to ensure our website is as secure as possible, however, users need to be mindful that the world wide web is not a secure medium. IFMC and its associates take no liability for any interference or damage to a user's computer system, software or data occurring in connection with our website. We strongly recommend users take appropriate measures to ensure their computer is protected against third party interference whilst on the web.

Our site contains links to external websites such as HotDoc which IFMC adds to improve the service we offer and expand upon the information readily available to you. Once a user decides to click on a link and navigate away from IFMC website the privacy policy noted here is no longer in effect. Users are recommended to familiarise themselves with the privacy policies on those websites once they browse and interact with them. Recommendations or views purported on those websites are not necessarily reflective of those views held by IFMC.

How can you access and correct your personal information at the practice?

You have the right to request access to, and correction of, your personal information.

The practice acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. We require you to put this signed request in writing and our practice will respond within a reasonable timeframe (30 days). Any fees that may be associated with providing this information will be determined by the doctor.

Our practice will take reasonable steps to correct your personal information where the information is either inaccurate or out of date. Sometimes, we will ask you to verify your personal information held by the practice is correct and current. You may request we correct or update your information. To do this please contact:

Suzi Dugandzija, Operations Manager.

Address; IFMC 338-340 Crown Street Wollongong NSW 2500

Email: ifmc@ifmc.net.au

How can you lodge a privacy-related complaint, and how will the complaint be handled at the 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 the resolution procedure.

Please contact:

Suzi Dugandzija, Operations Manager.

Address; IFMC 338-340 Crown Street Wollongong NSW 2500

Email: ifmc@ifmc.net.au

Please allow 30 days response time.

If you do not feel we have resolved your issue You may also contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner. The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner will require you to give them time to respond before they investigate. For further information visit www.oaic.gov.au or call the OAIC (Office of the Australian Information Commissioner) on 1300 363 992.

Policy review statement

Our privacy policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current obligations and ensure any changes that might occur.

The policy will be reviewed more frequently when there are significant changes to the way the practice is operating or if legislation is updated.

We will notify patients via our website and notifications at the reception desk when this occurs.