



## PRIVACY POLICY AND MANAGING HEALTH INFORMATION

Histopath Diagnostic Specialists is committed to ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of your personal information. Histopath is committed to the right to privacy and the protection of personal and health information in accordance with privacy laws.

In this document, Histopath Diagnostic Specialists is variously referred to as Histopath, Us and We.

This Privacy Policy explains how we manage personal and health information of patients, including its collection, use, disclosure and security, and including any personal information that we collect through our website(s).

We manage your personal information in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles (APP's) contained in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

## 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).

### **CONSENT**

By providing personal information to us, you consent to us collecting, using and disclosing your personal information as described in this Policy.

In some circumstances, where it is not reasonable or practical for us to collect this information directly from you, responsible persons (for example, a spouse or partner, close family member, emergency contact or enduring medical power of attorney) can give consent for collection on your behalf.

You are not required to provide personal information to us. However, if you do not provide us with all the information we request, the services we provide to you may be affected. If you provide incomplete or inaccurate information to us, or withhold personal information from us, we may not be able to provide you with the services you are seeking, or otherwise engage with you.

## WHAT PERSONAL INFORMATION DO WE COLLECT?

The information we will collect about you includes your:

- names, date of birth, addresses, contact details
- medical information including medical history, medications, allergies, adverse events, immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors
- Medicare number (where available) for identification and claiming purposes
- healthcare identifiers
- health fund details
- Other information, occasionally including religion and ethnicity, which may be relevant in our dealings with you

The personal information we collect about you will include only the information that is necessary to provide you with services or is required for administrative and internal business purposes related to the services we provide to you.

### **ANONYMITY AND ALIASES**

In certain circumstances, you may have the option of dealing with us anonymously or by using an alias, however, this may limit the services that we can provide to you. In some circumstances, it may be impracticable for us to deal with you in such an unidentified manner.



## **USING GOVERNMENT IDENTIFIERS**

In certain circumstances we are required to collect government identifiers such as Medicare, pension or Veteran's Affairs numbers. We will only use or disclose this information in accordance with the law.

## **HOW DO WE COLLECT YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION?**

We will usually collect your personal information directly from you by email, telephone, in writing or in person, or through our website(s). Where it is not reasonable or practical for us to collect this information directly from you, we may need to collect information about you from a third party. In the case of patients, we may also collect information from a third party where your health may be at risk and we need your personal information to provide you with emergency medical treatment.

We may collect personal and health information from third parties such as:

- Medical practices if they have referred you to us or are involved in your care. (Your doctor will generally explain why he or she is collecting the information and where it is going to.)
- An individual's representatives (such as a relative or carer)
- Our own internal records to link your information
- The My Health Record program operated by the Commonwealth Department of Health, if you have chosen to participate
- Health insurers, law enforcement or other government instrumentalities.

## **HOW DOES HISTOPATH USE YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION?**

If an individual is to receive or has received a service from Histopath, we will collect and hold their personal information for the primary purpose for which it was collected (or a related secondary purpose).

Exceptions to this include:

- To coordinate and/or communicate with healthcare providers involved in your care
- To procure additional healthcare services on your behalf (such as referrals to other providers or obtaining second opinions)
- To conduct activities related to quality assurance/improvement processes, accreditation, audits, risk and claims management, patient satisfaction surveys and staff education and training
- To liaise with your health fund, Medicare, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Department of Health or another payer or contractor of services
- To fulfil regulatory and public health requirements, including liaising with regulatory or health authorities, as required by law
- To send you standard reminders (for example, for appointments for follow-up care, account management), by text message, mail or email to the number or address which you have provided to us
- To handle a complaint or respond to anticipated or existing legal actions
- To obtain feedback about our services or provide advice or information to you about products, services, treatment options and clinical trials that are relevant to you
- For billing and payments
- To engage you (as a contractor) to provide products or services to us
- To consider your application for employment with us.

In addition, we may de-identify or aggregate the personal information that we collect for the purpose of carrying out clinical research, quality assurance or customer service, health outcome and other business analytics.

We will not seek your consent to use your personal information for the purposes listed above.



### **USE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION FOR DIRECT MARKETING**

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

Our practice may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services we offer to our patients through research and analysis of our patient data.

If you have provided consent, we may use your personal information for marketing which is directly related to our services, in compliance with applicable laws, such as the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and Spam Act 2003 (Cth).

### **DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION**

During the course of providing services to you, or otherwise engaging with you, we may disclose your personal information to trusted third parties including:

- Healthcare service providers or other relevant parties involved in your care or requesting services on your behalf (including for the purpose of obtaining second opinions or making referrals, on your behalf, for specialist medical services)
- Statutory registries or bodies where requested to do so by you or as required by law (such as national cancer registries)
- Other third parties or organisations, if required by, and in order to comply with, our legal obligations
- Approved and trusted contractors, under agreement, as engaged by us to provide professional services (such as debt collection, information and communication technology providers, specialist clinical services).

Sensitive information is only ever disclosed for the purposes for which you gave it to us or for directly related purposes you would reasonably expect, or if you agree, for example, to handle a complaint.

Where we outsource any of our services or hire contractors to perform professional services, we will require them, under contract, to comply with the Privacy Act, or other relevant privacy legislation and, where applicable, our Privacy Policy.

We may use electronic processes to disclose your personal information as specified above, where available or relevant.

We will not seek your additional consent to disclose your personal information for the purposes listed above.

### **MY HEALTH RECORDS**

If you have chosen to participate in the My Health Record program operated by the Commonwealth Department of Health, we may access personal information stored in your My Health Record if the access permissions you have set allow this. When requested to do so, we may disclose your personal information by uploading your health information electronically to the My Health Record system.

If you do not want us to access personal information stored in your My Health Record, or to upload health information to it, you may opt out or choose to modify access controls within the My Health Record system.

## **STORING AND PROTECTING YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION**

We store personal and health information in different ways, including in paper and electronic form. The security of personal and health information is important to us and we take reasonable steps to protect it from misuse or loss and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

Some of the ways we do this include:

- requiring our staff to maintain confidentiality
- implementing document storage security
- imposing security measures for access to our computer systems



- providing a discreet environment for confidential discussions
- only allowing access to personal and health information where the individual seeking access to their own information has satisfied our identification requirements

### **RETENTION**

We will destroy or permanently de-identify any of your personal information that is no longer needed for the purposes described in the Policy, provided we are not required, under relevant accreditation standards or an Australian law, to retain the information.

### **KEEPING PERSONAL INFORMATION ACCURATE AND UP TO DATE**

We take all reasonable steps to ensure that the personal and health information we collect, use and disclose is accurate, complete and up to date.

However, the accuracy of that information depends largely on the quality of the information provided to us. We therefore suggest that individuals:

- let us know if there are any errors in their personal or health information; and
- keep us up to date with changes to their personal information (e.g. their name and address). Individuals may do this by mail or email

### **ACCESS TO PERSONAL INFORMATION**

You have the right to request access to the personal information about you which is held by us.

We will provide you with access to your information, unless there is a reason under the Privacy Act or other relevant law to refuse or limit such access, such as if we reasonably believe that giving access would pose a serious threat to the life, health or safety of any individual, or to public health or public safety; or giving access would have an unreasonable impact on the privacy of other individuals.

You may request access to the personal information we hold about you by contacting us.

To protect your privacy, we will need you to verify your identity prior to providing access to your information. We may recover reasonable costs associated with supplying this information to you.

In the specific case of obtaining access to your pathology results, the preferred method is in consultation with your treating practitioner, so that complex clinical information can be explained to you within the context of your individual circumstances.

### **ONLINE POLICY**

Histopath is committed to protecting online privacy. In general, visits to Histopath websites can be made without revealing any personal information.

Histopath websites contain links to websites operated by third parties. Histopath has no control over the privacy policies and practices of such third - party sites. When following links to other sites from a Histopath website we recommend that you read the privacy statement of that site to familiarise yourself with its privacy practices.

Email addresses provided will only be used to provide the requested service or response to specific user queries and will not be added to any mailing lists, nor disclosed to any other party without users' knowledge and consent, unless required by law.

Histopath may provide third parties with aggregate statistics about our visitors, traffic patterns and related site information. This data reflects site usage and does not contain identifying information.



## CONTACTING HISTOPATH ABOUT PRIVACY ISSUES AND COMPLAINTS

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 our resolution procedure.

We may need to verify your identity and ask for further information, in order to investigate and respond to your concern or complaint. We will aim to respond to you within a reasonable time, and generally within 21 days.

Histopath contact details

Address: The Manager

Histopath Diagnostic Specialists

PO Box 345 Macquarie Park NSW 2113

Email: [enquiry@histopath.com.au](mailto:enquiry@histopath.com.au)

Telephone: (02) 9878 8111

If we are unable to satisfactorily resolve your concern or complaint, you may wish to contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). The OAIC has the power to investigate the matter and make a determination.

If your concern or complaint relates to health information, you may also contact the relevant state or territory privacy commissioner.

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)

Address: The Manager

GPO Box 5218 Sydney NSW 2001

Email: [enquiries@oaic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@oaic.gov.au)

Telephone: 1300 363 992

Website: [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)