

# Privacy Policy and Disclaimer

This is the website of Surfcoast Medical Centre.

[www.surfcoastmedical.com.au](http://www.surfcoastmedical.com.au) is an online information website, consisting of information services and content, links and other internet resources.

When you visit this website our Internet Service Provider/Hosting Provider, will record your server address, domain name, the date and time of your visit to our site, the pages viewed and the information downloaded. This information is used for statistical and web site development purposes only.

This site uses cookies as a part of our interaction with your browser. A cookie is a small amount of information stored on your computer by our website. You can delete cookies from your hard drive at any time and further information on the use of cookies can be found at [www.cookiecentral.com/faq](http://www.cookiecentral.com/faq)

## **The Personal information we collect on you**

The type of personal information that we collect from you will depend on how you use our website. You can be certain that the information we receive about you will be treated as strictly confidential.

Information is collected to help us:

- fulfil your request
- understand the number of hits the website receives
- keep track of the domains from which this site is accessed
- determine what our users are interested in
- ensure as far as practical, that our websites and applications are compatible with the browsers and operating systems used by most of our users.
- Support strategic development

If you believe that any information that we hold about you is inaccurate or out of date, please contact us.

## **The circumstances under which we disclose information about you**

It is our policy not to sell or pass on any personal information that you may have provided to us unless we have your express consent to do so. An exception to this is where Surfcoast Medical Centre may be required by law to disclose certain information.

We will preserve the contents of any email or secure message that you send us if we believe that we have a legal requirement to do so.

## **Linking to and from this site**

The existence of external links on our websites shall not be construed as Surfcoast Medical Centre's endorsement, sponsorship, approval of, or affiliation with, another person unless the party providing the relevant link is authorised in writing to do so.

If you access this site via an external link, you do so at your own risk. While information and third party information contained on this site has been presented with all due care, Surfcoast Medical Centre does not warrant or represent that the information or the third party information, will remain unchanged after the date of publication and is free from errors or omissions. It is your responsibility to make own investigations, decisions and enquiries about the information retrieved from other internet sites.

## **Appointment bookings online**

Appointment bookings on line is located on the Practice's SSL page

Surfcoast Medical Centre has an agreement with an external provider HotDoc Online Pty Ltd. The patient application does not have direct contact to Surfcoast Medical Centre and only connects to HotDoc's cloud servers. All communication between the HotDoc cloud server and Surfcoast Medical Centre is encrypted using 128bit SSL encryption. HotDoc only handles data relating to the patient appointment and no other sensitive patient records are used or stored on the HotDoc system.

<https://www.hotdoc.com.au/terms-and-conditions> provides the Terms of Service for the HotDoc application.

## **Changes to this statement**

From time to time, we may make changes to the Privacy and Disclaimer Policy. This may be in relation to changes in the law, best practice or changes in our services. These changes will be reflected in this statement, so you should check here from time to time.

# Privacy Policy

## Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline how Surfcoast Medical Centre complies with confidentiality and privacy obligations. As an organisation, Surfcoast Medical Centre's principal concern is and always will be the health of patients who visit our practice. A high level of trust and confidentiality is required to ensure the confidence of the patients we serve.

*Patients can be assured that:*

- their privacy will be protected when visiting the Medical Centre,
- the information collected and retained in our records is correct and up-to-date, and
- that they can access their information for review.

## Health information

Surfcoast Medical Centre recognises that the information we collect is often of a highly sensitive nature and as an organisation we have adopted privacy compliance standards to ensure that patient's personal information is protected.

For administrative and billing purposes, and to enable the patients to be attended to by other medical practitioners at Surfcoast Medical Centre, patient information is shared between the medical practitioners and other health providers at the medical centre.

Surfcoast Medical Centre and the medical practitioners may collect personal information regarding patients (including health information) for the purpose of providing medical services and treatment.

*Personal information collected will generally include:*

- the patient's name, address, telephone number and Medicare number,
- current drugs or treatments used by the patient,
- previous/current medical history, including, where clinically relevant, a family medical history, and
- the name of any health service provider or medical specialist to whom the patient is referred, copies of any letters of referrals and copies of any reports back.

*SURFCOAST MEDICAL CENTRE may access information:*

- provided directly by the patient,
- provided on the patient's behalf with the patient's consent,
- from a health service provider who refers the patient to medical practitioners providing services at or from Surfcoast Medical Centre, or from health service providers to whom patients are referred.

## Use or disclosure of personal information

Personal information collected by Surfcoast Medical Centre may be used or disclosed:

- for the purpose advised to the patient at the time of collection of the information,
- as required for delivery of the health service to the patient,
- as required for the ordinary operation of our services (i.e. to refer the patient to a medical specialist or other health service provider),
- as required under compulsion of law, or
- where there is a serious and imminent threat to an individual's life, health, or safety; or a serious threat to public health or public safety.

Surfcoast Medical Centre may use or disclose personal information for quality assurance, training, billing, liaising with government offices regarding Medicare entitlements and payments and as may be required by the Medical Centre's insurers.

## ***Accuracy of your information***

Surfcoast Medical Centre is committed to ensuring your information is accurate and has processes in place to ensure that the accuracy of this information is maintained. If you believe that the personal information the Medical Centre holds about you is inaccurate, please inform Medical Centre staff when next attending the Centre.

## ***Security of information collected***

Other than as described in this Policy or permitted under privacy principles, Surfcoast Medical Centre uses its reasonable endeavours to ensure that identifying health information is not disclosed to any person unnecessarily or irresponsibly.

Due to the sensitive nature of the information collected by the Medical Centre to provide its services, extra precautions are taken to ensure the security of that information. Information may be stored electronically and / or in hard copy form. All electronically stored files are password-protected on several levels, and regular backups of data are performed.

Surfcoast Medical Centre requires its employees to observe obligations of confidentiality in the course of their employment with all staff signing Confidentiality Agreements.

## ***How long are medical records kept?***

Surfcoast Medical Centre keeps health information for a minimum of 7 years from the date of last entry in the patient records 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.

## ***Accessing your health information***

On request, you may have access to your medical record held by Surfcoast Medical Centre, except in circumstances where access may be denied under the 'Privacy Act' or other laws. For example, access can be denied when letting a patient see their records would pose a serious threat to the patient's life or health, or the life or health of someone else (such as a relative, the health service provider, staff or other patients).

The threat must be significant, for example where there is a serious risk the patient may cause self-harm or harm to another person if they saw the information. The threat can be a risk of danger to physical or mental health, but does not need to be imminent – it can be a serious threat that might occur sometime after access is granted.

## ***Can I transfer my medical records to a new medical practitioner?***

Yes, patients have the right to attend a medical practitioner of their choice and are free to leave a practice and attend another if they wish.

## ***How do I arrange this?***

There is a professional obligation for a medical practitioner to provide a new treating medical practitioner with all of the information that they need to take over a patient's care.

This is usually done by the patient completing a 'transfer of file' request form and providing an acceptable source of identification (preferably photo ID such as a current driver's license or passport).

When a patient requests that their health records be transferred to a medical practitioner outside Surfcoast Medical Centre, a copy or summary of the patient health record will be provided in a timely manner to facilitate care of the patient. Please note that under privacy legislation, the practice has 45 days within which to comply with the request.

For medico-legal reasons, our practice retains the original record and provides the new medical practitioner with a summary or a copy.

A patient can also have a copy of his/her medical records transferred by asking the new medical practitioner to arrange for the transfer of records from the previous treating medical practitioner.

### ***Can the doctor charge for the handing over of medical records?***

Some medical practitioners may charge a fee for handling and copying their records to cover the administrative costs involved. The previous medical practitioner may charge a fee for providing a summary, especially if a patient's medical history is long and/or complex.

### **Website privacy**

Surfcoast Medical Centre website contains links to other sites. Please be aware that Surfcoast Medical Centre is not responsible for the privacy practices of any linked sites. We encourage users who leave our site to read the privacy statements of each and every linked website that they choose to visit. All links to external sites are provided for your convenience. The information, products and advertisements contained in the linked sites are neither approved nor endorsed by Surfcoast Medical Centre, and Surfcoast Medical Centre is not responsible for such information, products or advertisements.

Your privacy is important to us and we want you to feel comfortable visiting our website. Any personal information that patients give to us, including e-mail addresses, will be used only in the following ways:

- personal data given to us by you will be securely stored
- we will not provide your personal data to any third party without your permission,
- we do not automatically collect your personal e-mail address simply because you visit our site
- if we join with a third party to provide services and you sign up for those services, we will share your name and other contact information necessary for our partner to provide the services to you,
- if you view specific pages or download information from specific pages on our website, we will track and add the number of your visits to the aggregate number of visits by all users in order to better design our website
- we may share aggregate demographic information with our affiliates. This is not linked to any personal information that can identify you or any other visitor to our web site.

By using Surfcoast Medical Centre website, you consent to the collection and use of your personal information as detailed in this Privacy Policy. We will post any changes to this Privacy Policy on our website so that you are kept up to date with the type of information we collect and the ways in which we use it.

### ***Changes to the Privacy Policy***

Surfcoast Medical Centre has the right to change the Privacy Policy at any time. If there are updates to Surfcoast Medical Centre's Privacy Policy, we will address the changes promptly and update the revision date of this document.

### **Obtaining further information**

If patients require more information regarding Surfcoast Medical Centre, its services and facilities, they can:

- ask a staff member,
- access Surfcoast Medical Centre website, or
- take a copy of Surfcoast Medical Centre 'Practice Information Sheet' located in the waiting room.

### **Contact information**

If you have any queries regarding our Privacy Policy please contact:

The Practice Manager  
Surfcoast Medical Centre  
100 Surfcoast Highway, TORQUAY VIC 3228, and  
McMillan Street, ANGLESEA VIC 3230

**Disclaimer**

While we make every effort to protect your privacy, we may need to disclose personal information when required by law where we have a good-faith belief that such action is necessary to comply with a current judicial proceeding, a court order or legal process served on our company or site.