



# Privacy Statement

## Keeping your records

This statement describes Dental Health Services (DHS) procedure for ensuring that personal patient information is processed fairly and lawfully in line with the Privacy Act 1988 and Public Sector Management Act 1994.

## What personal data do we hold?

In order to provide you with a high standard of dental care and attention, we need to hold personal information about you. This personal data comprises:

- Your past and current medical and dental condition; personal details such as your age, address, telephone number and your general medical practitioner
- Records of consent to treatment
- Information about the treatment that we have proposed, provided and its cost
- Radiographs, clinical photographs and study models if taken
- Notes of conversations or incidents that have occurred for which a record needs to be kept
- Any correspondence relating to you with other health care professionals, for example in the hospital or specialist services.

## How we collect your personal information

We collect your personal information via enrolment forms for children, registration forms for eligible adults and regular completion of medical history forms.

## Why do we hold information about you?

We need to keep comprehensive and accurate personal data about patients in order to provide you with safe and appropriate dental care. We will use the information if we need to write to you, to process accounts or for other administrative purposes relating to your treatment. For these reasons dental practitioners, dental clinic assistants, reception staff, dental technicians and DHS corporate staff require access to your personal information. DHS has a comprehensive Confidentiality and Privacy Policy as well as a Health Records – Access, Release, Transport and Storage Policy by which all staff must comply.

## Retaining information

We will retain your dental records while you are a patient and after you cease to be a patient, for at least seven years, or for children until age 25, whichever is the longer.

## Security of information

Personal data about you is held in the clinic's computer system and/or in a manual filing system. The information is only accessible to authorised team members. Our computer system has secure audit trails, we back up information to an external location routinely, and the manual filing system is locked. Any breach of security is investigated and reported in line with Health Practice Code for the use of personal health information provided by the Department of Health.

## Disclosure of information

In order to provide proper and safe dental care we may need to disclose personal information about you to:

- Your general medical practitioner
- Hospital or community dental services
- Other health professionals caring for you including specialists
- Payment authorities
- Centrelink, if you are claiming exemption or remission from dental charges

Disclosure will take place on a 'need-to-know' basis, so that only those individuals/organisations who need to know in order to provide care to you and for the proper administration of Government (whose personnel are covered by strict confidentiality rules) will be given the information. Only that information that the recipient needs to know will be disclosed.

In very limited circumstances or when required by law or a court order, personal data may have to be disclosed to a third party not connected with your health care. In all other situations, disclosure that is not covered by this Privacy Policy will only occur when we have your specific consent. Where possible you will be informed of these requests for disclosure.

Dental Health Services will not release information to any overseas recipients.

## Access to your records

You have the right of access to the data that we hold about you and the right to receive a copy, or you may authorise a third party, such as your lawyer, to do so on your behalf. Parents may access their child's records if this is in the child's best interests and not contrary to a competent child's wishes. To obtain a copy of your records please contact the Dental Health Services clinic you attend.

## For copies:

- Records held totally on computer are free of charge
- Records held in part on computer and in part manually are free of charge
- Records held totally manually are free of charge

We will provide a copy of the record within 40 days of receipt of the request and an explanation of your record should you require it.

## If you do not agree

If you do not wish personal data that we hold about you to be disclosed or used in the way that is described in this privacy information, please discuss the matter with your dentist. You have the right to object, however this may affect our ability to provide you with dental care.

## If you wish to complain about the way we deal with your information

Complaints should be in writing and we will respond within 30 days of receipt of your complaint. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint you can make a privacy complaint to The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)

Contact details are: **Telephone: 1300 363 992** **Email: [enquiries@oaic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@oaic.gov.au)** **Website: [oaic.gov.au](http://oaic.gov.au)**

