



NORTHSIDE CLINIC

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Patient Email Policy

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) has clear guidelines on the use of emails in General Practice. General Practices must ensure the communication of health information is safe and secure.

Patient information being emailed from the clinic between health services ideally should be via secure messaging platforms or encrypted. This is not always possible when emailing patients.

A patient's email address is stored on their file, and this is the email address that the clinic will use to send information to the patient. It is the patient's responsibility to ensure they keep their personal details, including their email address updated with the clinic at all times. If the patient requests the information is sent to a different email address than the one recorded on their file, the patient will be asked to complete a *Change of Details* form and return it to the clinic, before any information will be sent via email.

We require patients to have signed our *Electronic Communication Consent* form, which outlines the risks associated with emailing patient information, not limited to:

- Emails can be circulated, forward and stored in paper and electronic files
- Emails can be received by unintended recipients
- Emails can be intercepted, altered, forwarded or used with authorisation or detection
- Email can be used to introduce viruses into computer system

Patients should not communicate with the clinic via email if any of the above risks concern you.

All health information will be sent as a password protected PDF. We will not send documents without a password. Emails received to the clinic email from patients, are not encrypted. Patients emailing the clinic will receive our auto response that reminds patient of the risks associated with emailing the clinic, with the following statement:

Privacy:

It is NOT recommended that you send personal or medical information via email. If you choose to do so, you must accept the risk of a potential data breach containing your private information. We remind you that electronic communication is not encrypted and not secure, and whilst we will do everything to keep your information secure, errors can occur. This email account is accessed, read and used by many staff members within the practice so please be mindful if sending anything of a personal nature.