

VC DENTAL – FULL PRIVACY POLICY

Protecting your privacy – our Privacy Policy

VC Dental is committed to providing quality dental care for its patients. As a fundamental part of this commitment, the dentist(s) and staff of the practice, recognise the importance of protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the information that we collect about you and your health and the advice and treatment we provide to you.

If you have any questions about our Privacy Policy please do not hesitate to ask your dentist or our reception staff.

As well as being an important professional commitment to you, our practice is required to comply with applicable Commonwealth, State and Territory privacy laws. The Commonwealth privacy law is the Privacy Act 1988 and the State/Territory law is the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW). Under these laws, we are required to comply with a set of privacy Principles. A copy of these Principles is available for inspection at the reception desk.

As a part of our commitment to providing quality dental care to you, we need to collect, record and retain information about you, your health and our advice and treatment provided to you. This information will include:

- personal details (including your name, address, date of birth, contact details and details for next of kin and your health fund membership or other insurer where relevant)
- Your Medicare card number, your Medicare issued individual health identifier and whether you have a personal electronic health record
- your dental history and other relevant health information
- notes made during the course of dental consultations
- x-rays, clinical images and photographs, other electronic records of your dental health and treatments provided
- referrals to other dental service providers
- results and reports received from other dental and health service providers

Generally, we will collect this information directly from you (and where required for your dental care, your family members or carer) or from your oral health professionals and health services who have been treating you. If we need to get information from other persons, we will ask your permission to do so. We may need to contact your health fund or other insurer to confirm your insurance coverage.

We may collect this information through a variety of ways including completing of forms, telephone, email, SMS, surveys.

It is important that the information we hold about you remains accurate and up to date. Please let us know of any changes in your contact and other personal details. Our staff will confirm your current address and contact details with you from time to time for this purpose.

The information we hold about you will be used for the purposes of providing advice and treatment to you, referrals to other health professionals, obtaining advice from other health professionals on x-rays, other images, tests or treatment options, managing our accounts, and billing your health fund or insurer, for our practice clinical quality management, training of our staff and for investigation and resolution of any concerns you may have about our services to you.

Our practice participates in the national electronic health record system to ensure that you and your other treating health professionals have access to up to date information wherever you are treated. This requires that we also store your Medicare issued unique identifier.

Due to legislative requirements or a court order (e.g. subpoena), we may be required to disclose information about you to regulators, law enforcement bodies or other parties without your prior knowledge or consent. Subject to any legal constraints, we will use reasonable steps to let you know of these requests.

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We may also use the contact information you provide to keep you updated on our services and other dental or health improvement products or services that we feel are relevant to your dental health or we think may be of interest to you. If you do not want to receive this information, please let us know.

We will take appropriate steps to protect the security of the information we hold about, including protection against unauthorised access, virus or other electronic intrusions, fire, theft or loss. Your electronic records are protected by a security password. Your paper records are kept in secure filing cabinets and accessible only by practice staff. Our staff are bound by strict requirements regarding protection of the privacy and confidentiality of your dental records as a condition of their contract with us.

We store your records at our practice and in electronic systems under our control. Our practice is part of a larger dental practice VC Dental East Gosford and our other location VC Dental Kariiong. To improve our service to you we also use contracted providers to hold or store part of your records. These providers are based in Australia. Our contracts with them require that they also protect the privacy and confidentiality of your information.

As a patient of this practice you have the rights of access to the information we hold concerning you. Should you wish to access this information we refer you to our hand-out entitled 'Accessing Your Dental Record'. There may be a fee involved to cover the costs of providing copies of this information to you.

As part of our commitment to improving the quality of our dental services, we may participate in research programs, professional development and other educational activities. We may use the information we hold about you to assist with this research and education. However, this information will not identify you unless we have received your agreement to do so or the research study has been approved by a research ethics committee that complies with the National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines and applicable privacy law.

We will keep your dental records after you cease to be a patient of the practice. This is to enable us to provide information to your future dentist if required and for medicolegal reasons. Legislation also requires us to keep your records for a number of years after you cease to be a patient of the practice.

Should you, at any time, have a query or concern in relation to our privacy policy and/or management of your information please let our staff know and they will be happy to address any concerns you may have. If your concerns are not resolved by our staff, or you have a complaint about our privacy management, please advise your dentist. We will make our best endeavour to address your complaint within 14 days of receipt of your complaint. If you are not satisfied by our response, you have a right to make a complaint to the Commonwealth or State/Territory Privacy Commissioner and we can provide you with their contact details.

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