

NSW School Based Vaccination Program Information Privacy Leaflet for Patients

Our obligations

The NSW public health service is committed to safeguarding the privacy of patient information, and has implemented measures to comply with its obligations under the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002. Our staff are bound by law, by NSW Health privacy policy and by a strict code of conduct to maintain confidentiality of patient information.

This leaflet provides you with details of what personal information is held about you and your child, how you can access this information and the purposes for which personal information is used and disclosed. Your personal information includes personal details about you and your child and personal health information relating to your child's immunisation.

Collection

We collect personal information so that we can provide your child with the appropriate immunisation services. We only collect information that is relevant and necessary for your child's immunisation and to manage immunisation services.

We collect information directly from you and your child, wherever possible. We may need to collect information from your child's school and other health professionals who have treated your child. In an emergency we may also need to collect information from another family member, friend, carer or other person who can help us to provide your child with the best care.

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure the information we collect about you and your child is stored securely. We are required by law to retain medical records for certain periods of time depending on the type of record and facility. We have appropriate systems and policies in place to protect your information from loss, unauthorised access and misuse.

If you do not wish for us to collect certain information about you or your child, you need to tell us and we will discuss with you any consequences this may have for your child's care.

Use and disclosure

We will use or disclose information related to you or your child for purposes directly related to your child's immunisation, and any other health care issues that may arise during the immunisation program, in ways that you would reasonably expect. This may include the transfer of relevant information to your nominated GP, to another treating health service or hospital, to the Ambulance Service of NSW, to a specialist for a referral, for pathology tests, and so on.

Use and disclosure continued

We are required to disclose some patient information to State and Commonwealth government agencies to comply with laws regarding the reporting of notifiable diseases and statistics. Personal information may be required as evidence in court when subpoenaed.

We may use or disclose patient information for billing, statutory reporting and other purposes required for the operation of the NSW health service, including safety and quality improvement initiatives. For example, where relevant, we may need to disclose patient information to Medicare, or private health funds.

We may use your information to contact you regarding patient satisfaction surveys that help us to evaluate and improve our services.

We may use or disclose your information for the following purposes in accordance with Statutory Guidelines issued under privacy law:

- for public interest research projects complying with strict protocols and approved by a Human Research & Ethics Committee
- for staff and student training purposes,
- for other planning, financial or management purposes for health service activities

The Statutory Guidelines ensure that where your information is needed for these purposes and it is impracticable to seek your consent, a minimum amount of personal information is used, and the personal information is handled in accordance with strict standards.

We will seek your consent prior to the use or disclosure of patient information for purposes other than those listed above, such as for fundraising activities.

Access to your information

You are entitled to request access to your personal information held by us, and to that of your child. Access to your personal information may be declined in special circumstances, such as where giving access would put you or another person at risk of harm. You may be charged a fee if you request copies of your personal information or medical record.

If you believe the information we hold about you is incorrect and an error has been made, please let us know and we will correct the information. If we believe the information is correct, you may request for your view to be noted on the record.

Requests for access to or correction of your medical record should be addressed to your health service provider's Medical Record Department.

Contact us

If you have questions or a complaint about the privacy of your personal information, please contact your local Public Health Unit.