

Narangba Family Medical Practice Telephone, E mail and Social media Policy



Our practice allows patients to obtain timely advice or information about their clinical care via the telephone.

Staff members are mindful of confidentiality and respect the patient's right to privacy. Patient names are not openly stated over the telephone within earshot of other patients or visitors. This Practice prides itself on the high calibre of customer service we provide, especially in the area of patient security, confidentiality, and right to privacy, dignity and respect.

The staff are trained to identify the patient asking minimum three questions such as date of Birth, Full name and address, the patient telephone number is on display on our phone system. Once the patient is identified, our staff continue with the phone call.

It is important for patients telephoning our practice to have the urgency of their needs determined promptly. Staff should try to obtain adequate information from the patient to assess whether the call is an emergency before placing the call on hold. Staff members have been trained initially, and on an ongoing basis, to recognise urgent medical matters and the procedures for obtaining urgent medical attention. Reception staff members have been informed of when to put telephone calls through to the nursing and medical staff for clarification.

Patient messages taken for subsequent follow-up by a doctor or other staff member are documented for their attention and action, or in their absence to the designated person who is responsible for that absent team members workload. Staff inserts the details of all calls and telephone conversations assessed to be significant in a telephone call log of Best Practice.

The doctor needs to determine if advice can be given on the phone or if a face to face consultation is necessary, being mindful of clinical safety and patient confidentiality. Patients are advised if a fee will be incurred for phone advice. Non-medical Staff does not give treatment or advice over the telephone. The release of test results over the phone by non-clinical staff is discouraged and can only be done under strict doctor instructions. Before results are given over the telephone, all patients are identified using 3 approved patient identifiers.

All practice staff are familiar with each GPs policy for returning telephone calls.

Staff do not give out details of patients who have consultations here nor any other identifying or accounts information, except as deemed necessary by government legislation or for health insurance funds.

A comprehensive phone answering message is maintained and activated to advise patients of how to access medical care outside normal opening hours. This includes advising patients to call 000 if it is an emergency.

Staff are aware of alternative modes of communication that may be used by patients with a disability or special needs including the Translating and Interpreter Service (TIS) and the National Relay Service.

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Important or clinically significant communications with or about patients are noted in the patients' health record.

Our telephone system is connected to after hour service from 6 pm Monday to Friday, From 12 noon Saturday and all day Sunday and Public holidays.

Our staff are trained to use Practice email system. The patients can communicate via emails and automatic response system is in place. However we recognise the patient prior to provide any medical or private information via emails. The practice staff can use practice email for private purposes, but they are aware that no patient information of Practice business information to be pass on.

Our staff are trained to use social media and aware that no patient information of private information including Practice business information are to be discuss or publish or pass on.

Communication with patients via electronic means

Policy

Patients are able to obtain advice or information related to their care or appointment reminders by electronic means, where the doctor determines that a face-to-face consultation is unnecessary. Electronic communication includes: email, fax, and SMS.

Practice staff and doctors determine how they communicate electronically with patients, both receiving and sending messages. All significant electronic contact with patients is recorded in the patient health records.

Patients are advised through the Practice Information Sheet the practice policy on electronic communications including:

- Seeking permission or consent from patients
- The possibility for electronic communications and information to be compromised
- Notification of any costs involved
- The frequency of which emails are read by a member of practice staff

When an email message is sent or received in the course of a person's duties, that message is a business communication and therefore constitutes an official record.

Employees should be aware that electronic communications could, depending on the technology, be forwarded, intercepted, printed and stored by others. Electronic mail is the equivalent of a post card. In regards to this, health information given in electronic communications should be limited and discussed in more general terms. Patients should be advised that information may be compromised.

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Wherever possible, the practice should ensure secure encryption of emails is taking place.

The Practice Website

Our practice has a website to communicate to patient's important information about our practice.

It is the responsibility of *IT Manager* to update the practice website on an annual basis or as required.

The practice website can be accessed using the following link www.narangba-medical.com.au

The website is continually monitored to ensure it is kept current and up to date. It contains the minimum information required on the practice information sheet. Any changes to the practice information sheet are also reflected on the website.