

## Communication Policy



There are multiple ways in which the practice communicates with patients and third parties. Communication can occur through the following channels:

### Face to Face

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This can be via consultation with your doctor or nurse or interactions with other practice staff.

### Telephone

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Patients can contact the practice via telephone between 8:00am and 6:00pm Monday to Friday and 8:00am to 12:00pm on Saturday. Outside of those times, we have an automatic recorded message on our telephone system. We do not have any voicemail.

Our reception staff may use a triage system to assess the urgency of the patients' needs and concerns. Our reception staff will also perform a three-point identity check to ensure the correct patient file is matched to the patient on the phone.

Doctors are unavailable by phone unless you have booked a telehealth appointment or in the event of an emergency. Our doctors are consulting during surgery hours and interruptions must be kept to a minimum as a courtesy to other patients. You can leave your query with reception who will send the doctor a secure message. Where clinically significant information is discussed, a note will be made in the patient's file.

### Fax

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Incoming faxes that are patient related are imported directly into the patient's file. These are then reviewed and actioned by the doctor. Any urgent patient related faxes are immediately handed to the doctor or if that doctor is not available another doctor in the practice will review the fax.

All outgoing faxes are double-checked before being sent to confirm they are being sent to the correct recipient.

### Email

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Email is not a secure form of communication and we do not use this to communicate personal information to patients without their consent. Patients must be aware that any communication they direct to the surgery via email is also NOT secure and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Patients communicating through email do so at their own risk.

If you do choose to contact the surgery via email, this is considered as patient consent for our staff to reply via email. Our staff endeavour to respond to email messages within 24 hours. If you have an issue that requires urgent attention, we request that you contact the practice via telephone.

Emails sent from the practice will be password protected and the recipient will be required to enter the password to access the information.

## Communication Policy

### SMS

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SMS messages are sent to remind patients of scheduled appointments; health reminders and health recalls SMS may also be used to communicate information about an upcoming appointment. Please make sure you update the practice if there is a change to your mobile number. Please let us know if you would like to be removed from SMS communication. Patients must be aware that if another person can access their mobile phone, then the confidentiality of these communications cannot be protected by the practice.

### Post

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For patients who have opted out of SMS, a letter may be sent regarding reminders or recalls. Letters received by the practice are scanned into the patient file and forwarded to the doctor to review.

### Website

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Our website is updated regularly and contains the practice contact details, location, opening hours and information regarding fees and services offered. Our online booking and after-hours doctor service details are also available.

### Communicating With Patients with Special Needs

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A contact list of translator and interpreter services and services for patients with a disability is maintained, updated regularly and readily available to all staff at reception. These include:

- [National Relay Service \(NRS\)](#)
- [National Interpreter Booking Service \(NABS\)](#)
- Auslan services 1300 AUSLAN
- Translation and Interpreter Service (TIS) Doctors Priority Line [1300 131 450](#)

### Discussing Medical Information

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The reception staff members are not qualified to provide medical advice and are not entitled to discuss any medical information over phone, email, or any other communication channel. If you wish to discuss your health, you will need to make an appointment with a doctor or nurse.