

# Ridges Family Medical Practice

## Privacy Policy

Aligned with RACGP Standards for General Practices (5th Edition)

Indicators: C3.6C, C6.3A, C6.3B, C6.3C, C6.3D, C6.4B, C6.4C, C6.4D, C6.4E

Practice Name:	Ridges Family Medical Practice
Address:	101/66 Jeremiah Drive, Cooranbong NSW 2265
Phone:	02 4042 6000
Principal GP:	Dr Chamila Kulasekara
Practice Manager:	Siriporn Deamer
Registered Nurse:	Laura Hunt

### 1. Purpose

Ridges Family Medical Practice respects the privacy and confidentiality of patient health information. This policy explains how the practice collects, stores, uses and discloses patient information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988, the Australian Privacy Principles and RACGP Standards for General Practices (5th Edition).

### 2. Collection of Health Information (C6.3A)

The practice collects personal and health information necessary to provide safe and effective healthcare. Information collected may include patient identification details, medical history, medications, allergies, test results, treatment plans and specialist correspondence. Information is usually collected directly from patients but may also be obtained from hospitals, specialists or other healthcare providers.

### 3. Use of Health Information (C6.3B)

Health information is used primarily to provide diagnosis, treatment and ongoing healthcare. Information may also be used for administrative purposes, Medicare billing, quality improvement, accreditation activities and communication with other healthcare providers involved in the patient's care.

### 4. Disclosure of Health Information (C6.3C)

Patient information may be shared with other healthcare providers such as specialists, hospitals, pathology services and imaging providers where necessary for patient care. Information may also be disclosed where required by law, including public health reporting requirements.

### 5. Patient Consent and Control (C6.3D)

Where possible, the practice seeks patient consent before sharing health information. Patients may request that certain information not be shared with specific providers, except where disclosure is required by law or necessary to prevent serious risk to health or safety.

## **6. Privacy and Confidentiality (C3.6C)**

All staff at Ridges Family Medical Practice are required to maintain strict patient confidentiality. Staff only access patient records necessary for their professional duties. Breaches of confidentiality are taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action.

## **7. Security of Health Information (C6.4B)**

The practice takes reasonable steps to protect health information from misuse, loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. Physical security measures include restricted access to clinical areas and secure storage of records. Electronic security includes password protected systems and secure clinical software.

## **8. Electronic Information Protection (C6.4C)**

Electronic medical records are protected by secure user logins, password policies, firewall protection, antivirus systems and secure backup procedures. Only authorised staff members may access clinical software systems.

## **9. Data Backup and Recovery (C6.4D)**

The practice performs regular secure backups of electronic medical records to protect against data loss. Backup systems are tested periodically as part of the practice business continuity and disaster recovery planning.

## **10. Data Breach Response (C6.4E)**

Any suspected data breach or unauthorised access to patient information must be reported immediately to the Practice Manager. The practice follows the Notifiable Data Breaches Scheme and will notify affected patients and authorities where required by law.

## **11. Patient Access to Records**

Patients may request access to their medical records. Requests will be processed within a reasonable timeframe. A reasonable administrative fee may apply for copying or transferring records.

## **12. Complaints**

Patients who have concerns about privacy may contact the Practice Manager. If the complaint is not resolved, patients may contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC).

## **13. Review**

This privacy policy will be reviewed every two years or when relevant legislation or RACGP standards change.

Approved By	Dr Chamila Kulasekara – Principal GP
Policy Owner	Siriporn Deamer – Practice Manager
Clinical Lead	Laura Hunt – Registered Nurse
Review Period	2 Years
Standards Reference	RACGP 5th Edition – C3.6C, C6 Series