

EMAIL POLICY

DONNYBROOK FAMILY DOCTORS

This policy sets out the guidance around accepting electronic communication through email within the practice. Our practice considers our obligations under the Privacy Act before we use or disclose any health information. The Privacy Act does not prescribe how a healthcare organization should communicate health information. Any method of communication may be used as long as the organization takes reasonable steps to protect the information transmitted and the privacy of the patient. A failure to take reasonable steps to protect health information may constitute a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles and may result in action taken against the organization by the Australian Privacy Commissioner.

Our email address is info@dfdoctors.com.au.

Patients can use this email address to communicate with our practice, including all of our doctors and staff, subject to the warnings discussed below.

We aim to respond to emails within 24 hours receipt. If you require a more urgent response, please call us on (08) 9731 1888 to ensure we address your query sooner.

The practice uses an email disclaimer on outgoing emails:

“DISCLAIMER: Please Note that any electronic communication could be intercepted or read by someone other than the intended recipient and it is at your discretion for proceeding with electronic communication. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error, please notify the system manager. This message contains confidential information and is intended only for the individual named. If you are not the named addressee you should not disseminate, distribute or copy this e-mail. Please notify the sender immediately by e-mail if you have received this e-mail by mistake and delete this e-mail from your system. If you are not the intended recipient you are notified that disclosing, copying, distributing or taking any action in reliance on the contents of this information is strictly prohibited.”

BOOKING, CHANGING OR CANCELLING APPOINTMENTS

Patients are advised to not email us with requests for appointments or changes to appointments. Instead, please phone us on (08) 9731 1888 to book, change or cancel an appointment.

Patients can also book an appointment online using HotDoc.

Unless a patient has opted out, they will receive an SMS appointment reminder the day before an appointment, and can use the link in the SMS to change or cancel this appointment.

WARNING REGARDING THE SECURITY OF EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS

Please note that our email service is not encrypted, and therefore we cannot guarantee the security of our email communications. There is a risk that emails and/or attachments could be read by someone other than the intended recipient (for example, as a result of widespread hacking, or because someone accesses your email account).

For this reason, we discourage health providers from sending emails to us with personal information about patients, and we discourage patients from sending emails to us with their own personal information.

However, in certain circumstances, we may agree to email a patient with a response to a query and/or with information or documentation that has been requested which does include your health information, provided that the patient has confirmed and accepted the risks associated with email communications. Before we do so, the practice will verify the patient's identity and email address. We may also require you to put into writing that you have considered and accepted the risks associated with email communications.

If you require us to send any information related to you via email, we will encrypt the concerned document(s) and you will have to call us and prove your identity before we share the password for the same.

OTHER HEALTH PRACTITIONERS

We ask that other health practitioners **do not email us with personal information** about mutual patients (unless you have the patient's express consent).

We prefer to receive correspondence via secure messaging, such as HealthLink. Please avoid faxing or posting us correspondence if you are able to send via HealthLink.