

Barwon Health is committed to respecting your privacy and protecting your personal and health information.

- We support, promote and comply with the Health Records Act 2001 (HRA) and other Victorian Privacy legislation on how we collect, use, protect and share personal health information.
- Your information is stored in a secure manner, and only authorised personnel have access to your information.
- All personnel are bound by a strict code of conduct with respect to maintaining the confidentiality, privacy and security of your information.
- The collection of your personal health information is limited to that which is necessary.
- You have the right to access your medical record and personal information held by Barwon Health under the Freedom of Information Act 1982.
- If you identify information that is incorrect or you do not agree with, you have the right to request that it be amended.

What information is collected?

When you become a consumer at Barwon Health, a record is made containing your name and contact details, information regarding your health issues, treatment or advice you were given; as well as contact details of your next of kin and other health care providers if needed for your care. We will collect your information directly from you and with your knowledge where we can. This may be when you:

- fill out a form such as the Patient Registration Information Sheet (either online, or sent to you in the mail)
- receive our health services (at one of our service contact points)

Barwon Health will also collect information about you from other health services as necessary and this information will be added to your record. Your information may be included on clinical databases where necessary for your treatment and ongoing care.

With your permission, we may also collect the following information:

- contact details of your local doctor or General Practitioner (GP)
- your email address (we normally send information containing your private health information to you by letter)

When you engage with a Barwon Health service we will ask you to check your details and update them as required and new information may be added to your record. You can alert us that your details or email preferences have changed through the 'Change of details' form on the Barwon Health website. Alternatively, during business hours you can update your personal details or preferences in person at one of our service contact points.



How we protect your health information

Information about you is stored in both a paper and electronic health record which is stored securely. Information stored on Barwon Health's computer systems are password protected. Only authorised personnel have access to your information.

Why information is collected and how it is used within Barwon Health?

Your information is important and helps ensure every healthcare professional involved has all the information available for shared decision making about your care and provide you with the best possible treatment. In order to provide you with safe, quality care, we need to collect certain information. For example, we can't send you details of upcoming appointments if we don't have your name and address and we can't provide your GP with a summary of your care if we don't have their contact details.

Your information may also be used in the education of health professional students and they will have access to healthcare records and patient information whilst they are completing clinical placements at Barwon Health. Students and education providers are obliged to abide by the practices set out in this Privacy Policy.

We may use information about you to improve the quality and effectiveness of our healthcare, plan better services, understand health trends and for research and teaching purposes. Staff carrying out these activities must follow strict guidelines, gain appropriate consent and maintain confidentiality. Information is only made available for research projects approved by our ethics committee, following thorough investigation and review.

After you have left our care we may contact you to offer health education, ask you to join a research project or complete a survey about your hospital visit.

What happens to my information and who is it shared with?

We may share your information with people outside Barwon Health:

You:

For security reasons, we normally send out information about your upcoming appointments/care by post. If the post is unable to deliver this information to you in time, we may with your permission, email you information and instructions for your own care at future appointments at Barwon Health. It is important to understand that email is not a secure way to send health information and it creates risks to your privacy. You may update your preferences, regarding our use of your email address by alerting us through the 'Change of details' form on the [Barwon Health website](#) or visiting one of our service contact points during business hours.

Your next of kin:

General information about your condition may be provided to your next of kin whilst you are an inpatient, unless you request otherwise.



Other services, your GP:

We may need to share your information with other service providers to meet your care needs including other health care providers such as your specialist, patient transport services or community services.

With your consent, we collect the name and address of your local doctor so that we may share information with them following your discharge from hospital, or an emergency or outpatient visit. This information is a summary of any treatment you have received, your medication requirements and any special instructions that the doctor may need to be aware of. It is routine practice for us to send this summary to your doctor by letter, fax or securely transfer this information electronically.

Other hospitals, new doctors and other agencies:

Other hospitals or new doctors that you visit may contact Barwon Health to obtain information about you so that they can provide treatment for you. We will verify their identity, location and authorisation before transmitting or disclosing the information to them. In an emergency situation however, we will release information to facilitate your care.

We may be legally required to release information about you, including:

- Reporting notifiable diseases to the Department of Health and Human Services
- To police or child protection services
- Information provided to a court or tribunal when subpoenaed.

We may be required to contact Medicare, your Private Health Insurance Company, Travel Insurance Company or the Department of Immigration to verify your eligibility for care as a new patient.

We may also release your information without your consent where there is a serious threat to the life, health, safety or welfare of any individual or a serious threat to public health, public safety or public welfare.

Certain information relating to your hospital visit may be forwarded to other organisations, such as the Department of Health and Human Services. This information is summarised and does not identify you. It is used for funding, planning and improving health care quality.

My Health Record

If you have opted in, we will send information to your national e-health record – My Health Record. Changes to My Health Record mean that the automatic creation of My Health Record for every Australian will begin in 2018. If you do not want a record, you will have an opportunity to opt out from mid 2018. Further details are available at <https://www.myhealthrecord.gov.au/>

How can I access information about me?

You can apply to access your information under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 which sets out your right to access your medical record and personal information held by Barwon Health. Information regarding Freedom of Information can be found on the BH website: <http://www.barwonhealth.org.au/general-questions/item/how-do-i> or through the State Government of Victoria website <http://www.foi.vic.gov.au/>

If you have any further questions or would like to request access to your information you can contact the Freedom of Information Officer.



To make a request contact:

The Freedom of Information Officer
Information Services
PO Box 281
Geelong VIC 3220

Phone: 03 4215 1168

Fax: 03 4215 1242

Web: <http://www.barwonhealth.org.au/general-questions>

An application fee is charged for a request for access to documents under Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic) (FOI Act). If you identify information in your record that is incorrect or you do not agree with, you have the right to request that it be amended (fees may apply). Other fees and charges may also be applicable. The FOI Officer can explain fees and charges to you.

Privacy Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns about your privacy we encourage you to contact the Barwon Health Consumer Liaison Office by:

Consumer Liaison

Barwon Health

PO Box 281

Geelong VIC 3220

Phone: (03) 4215 1251

Email: clo@barwonhealth.org.au

Web: <http://www.barwonhealth.org.au/contact/column-1/compliments-complaints>

This document was developed by **Health Information Services**, Barwon Health.

