

Communication Policy

There are multiple ways in which this practice communicates with patients and third parties.

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

Telephone – Patients can contact the practice between 8:00am and 5:30pm Monday to Thursday and 8:00am to 4:00pm on a Friday. 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 identifier check to ensure the correct patient file is matched to the patient on the phone. Please note, it is often not possible to speak to the doctor at the time of calling. A secure message will be sent to the doctor who will return your call when possible, exceptions may be made if the matter is deemed to be urgent. A note will be made in the patients file.

When correspondence is received from other healthcare providers, it is directly imported into the patient's file and then sent through to the doctor to review. This includes results, emails and specialist letters. If the addressed doctor is not available and the correspondence is urgent, another doctor will review and action as necessary.

Fax- Faxes received 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 non-patient related faxes are given to the relevant staff member.

Email – Email is not a secure form of communication and is not encouraged by Family Care GP.

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 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.

SMS – SMS messages are sent to remind patients of scheduled appointments, health reminders and health recalls. 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 the SMS list. 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- 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- Our website is updated regularly and contains the practice contact details, location, opening hours and information regarding fees and services offered. Our online booking during office hours and also after-hours doctor service details are also available.

Facebook- Our facebook page has practice information and health promotions. This page however, is intended for announcements only by Family Care GP and not for the provision of individual medical advice. This page is not regularly monitored for comments. If you have any queries or questions we ask that you please contact the practice via telephone.

Communicating with patients with special needs

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) for hearing impaired
- Translation and Interpreter Service (TIS) Doctors Priority Line 1300 131 450