

1. Overview and purpose

Dr Peter Spittaler, Neurosurgeon, respects your rights to privacy and we take our privacy obligations seriously. We comply with the Australian Privacy Principles, found under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) 'Privacy Act'.

When you first register as a patient, our new patient consent form requests your consent so that we can collect, use, hold and share your personal information in order to provide you with the best possible healthcare and to allow us to manage our practice. If we intend to use your personal information for any other purpose, we will seek your consent first.

This privacy policy explains:

- how we manage your personal information (including your health information), including the collection, use, disclosure, quality and security of your personal information.
- the kinds of information we collect and how that information is held;
- the purposes for which we collect, hold, use and disclose personal information;
- how you can access your personal information and how you can request to correct such information; and
- how you can complain about a breach of your privacy and how we will handle your complaint.

If you have any queries, concerns or feedback regarding our Privacy Policy, please do not hesitate to contact our Practice on 02 4969 8988.

Email: admin@hunterneurosurgery.com.au

Post: Hunter Neurosurgery 44 Hudson Street, Hamilton NSW 2303.

In this Privacy Policy, we use the terms:

“Personal information” as defined in the Privacy Act. This means: “information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable:

- whether the information or opinion is true or not; and
- whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not”;

“Health information” as defined in the Privacy Act. This is a subset of “personal information” and means information or an opinion about:

- the health or a disability (at any time) of an individual;
- an individual’s expressed wishes about the future provision of health services to him or her; or
- a health service provided or to be provided to an individual.

Personal information also includes “sensitive information” which is information such as your race, religion, political opinions, sexual preferences and/or “health information”. Information which is “sensitive information” attracts a higher privacy standard under the Privacy Act and is subject to additional mechanisms for your protection.

We, Us, Our, shall mean:

1. Dr Peter Spittaler
2. Employed, contracted and independent medical and healthcare practitioners who practice from our rooms.

2. Collection of personal information

Dr Peter Spittaler collects information which is necessary to provide you with healthcare services and to appropriately manage and conduct our business. This includes collecting personal information and such as your name and contact details, medical history, family history, past and current treatments, lifestyle factors and any other information which is necessary to assist us in providing you appropriate care. We will also collect your Medicare number and Private Health Fund details (where applicable).

You have the right to deal with us anonymously or under a pseudonym unless it is impracticable for us to do so or unless we are required or authorised by law to only deal with identified individuals. It is important to be aware that if you provide incomplete or inaccurate information or withhold information it may compromise the quality of care we are able to provide to you.

Dr Peter Spittaler will usually collect your personal information directly from you, including from patient consent forms, medical records and consultations with you, or from another health service provider. Sometimes we need to collect information about you from third parties, such as relatives and friends and private health insurers.

We will only collect information from third parties where:

- you have consented to such collection; or
- such collection is necessary to enable us to provide you with appropriate healthcare services (such as emergency medical treatment or where your health is at risk);
- such collection is reasonably necessary to enable us to appropriately manage and conduct our business; or

3. How we use your personal information

Dr Peter Spittaler only uses your personal information to provide you with Neurosurgery related healthcare services or to enable us to appropriately manage and conduct our business, unless:

- there is a secondary purpose which directly relates to the primary purpose, and you would reasonably expect, or Dr Peter Spittaler has informed you, that your information will be used for that secondary purpose, or you have given your consent for your personal information to be used for a secondary purpose;
- the disclosure of your information is necessary for the enforcement of criminal law or a law imposing a penalty or sanction, or for the protection of public revenue;
- the disclosure of your information will prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to somebody's life or health; or,
- Dr Peter Spittaler is required or authorised by law to disclose your information for another purpose.

For example, Dr Peter Spittaler uses your personal information:

- to provide healthcare services to you;
- to appropriately manage our practice, such as conducting audits and undertaking accreditation processes, manage billings and training staff;
- effectively communicate with third parties, including private health insurers, Medicare Australia and other government departments

4. Disclosing your personal information

Dr Peter Spittaler may disclose your personal information to our employees, contractors and service providers in order for us to provide healthcare services to you and to allow us to manage our business. We will also disclose your personal information to healthcare professionals directly involved in your treatment. Where your medical records are required in the case of a medical emergency, we will provide these to the relevant medical professional without waiting for your consent, where we believe this is in your interests.

Your personal information may also be provided to third parties if we are legally obliged to do so by a court subpoena, statutory authority, search warrant, coronial summons or to defend a legal action.

We may provide your personal information to third parties involved in your care, such as:

- your parents, children, relatives and close friends, guardians or a person exercising a power of attorney or enduring power of attorney. Please advise us if it is your wish no third party as stated to have access to your personal information;
- government departments and agencies, such as Defence or Department of Veterans Affairs, or departments responsible for health, aged care and disability where we are required to do so;
- private health insurers and Medicare Australia;
- anyone authorised by you to receive your personal information

Dr Peter Spittaler engages the following third party service providers who assist us in delivering our services to you:

- Other Medical Specialists
- GP/Surgical Assistants working in the practice
- IT consultants to host and manage our electronic medical records system

5. Overseas recipients

Dr Peter Spittaler does not engage with any overseas entities or persons where your personal information will be transferred, stored or disclosed. Should we wish to transfer your personal information overseas, we will ask for your consent before we do so.

6. Data storage, quality and security

As a company that handles personal information, We have a legal obligation to put appropriate security measures in place to prevent unauthorised access, theft, or loss. The Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW) in New South Wales requires us to implement security measures that are reasonable and appropriate for the sensitivity of the information we hold. To meet this obligation, We may need to implement physical security measures, such as keeping paper files containing personal information appropriate cabinets.

We may also need to implement technical security measures, such as using encryption or password protection to secure electronic files. It is important that our employees are trained in how to

handle personal information securely, and that access to personal information is restricted only to those who need it to perform their duties. By meeting these obligations, We can help protect the privacy of individuals and ensure that we comply with our legal obligations under the PPIPA.

7. Destroying your personal information

In compliance with NSW privacy standards, Dr. Peter Spittaler may dispose of records containing personal information when they are no longer required, subject to applicable laws. As your medical records held by us may contain sensitive information, we are obliged to follow relevant legislation in the retention and disposal of these records.

Once your hard copy file is no longer required, we transfer the files electronically to a secure and encrypted hosted service maintained by our IT contractors. After your data is entered onto our medical software, all paper copies are securely destroyed to ensure that your personal information remains confidential and is not susceptible to unauthorized access, theft, or loss

8. Accessing and amending your personal information

We encourage you to contact us if you have a query regarding your personal information. You may request an amendment to your personal information if you consider that it contains inaccurate, incorrect or incomplete information.

You have a right to request access to any information we hold about you. If you make a request to access personal information that you are entitled to access, we will provide you suitable means of accessing it. We will not charge you for making the request. In circumstances where you request, we provide a copy of your personal information to you, we may charge you a fee to cover our reasonable costs for complying with the request for access. There may be instances where we cannot grant you access to some of the information we hold. For example, we may need to refuse access if granting access would interfere with the privacy of others. If that is the case, we will provide you with a written explanation of those reasons. You can contact our practice should you have any questions, as above.

9. Complaints

If you have a complaint about how we have dealt with your personal information or believe we have breached your privacy, please contact us on the details below so that we may investigate it. We will deal with your complaint fairly and confidentially. On receipt of your complaint we will contact you within 10 business days to confirm what investigation action will occur. We will then communicate the outcome to you in writing and invite a response to our conclusion about the complaint. If we receive a response from you, we will also assess it and advise if we have changed our view. If you are unsatisfied with our response, you may make refer the complaint to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (<http://www.oaic.gov.au/>).

10. Review and change to Privacy Policy

We may alter this Privacy Policy following any legislative change or upon a review of our information handling processes. The current version of our Privacy Policy is available from:

- admin@hunterneurosurgery.com.au
- By contacting reception on 02 4969 8988
- Our practice, located at; Hunter Neurosurgery 44 Hudson Street, Hamilton NSW 2303