

Lagoon Medical Centre Email Policy

Current as of: 01/04/2020

In our practice, we do use emails as a method of communication, as it is becoming an increasingly more popular request from patients. Emails are accessible to staff on password protected computers which are only available to authorized staff.

General practices must consider their obligations under the Privacy Act before they 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 organisation 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. What amounts to reasonable steps will depend on the nature of the information and the potential harm that could be caused by unauthorized access to it.

The RACGP has developed a matrix is to assist practices in determining the level of security required in order to use email in general practice for communication.

We do ask patients if they have changed any of their personal details to inform the reception team, and make changes as necessary. If a patient does request to have something emailed to them, we do ask them to reconfirm their email address.

In our practice we inform patients of possible risks to their privacy if standard unencrypted email is used.

Practice staff should warn patients of the following possible risks:

Other people possibly gain access to the patients email and can access information communicated from the medical centre.

The information can be hacked due to being via electronic transmission.

There is a risk to others having access to private and confidential records due to electronic transmission.

This email policy is reviewed annually and changes are made as necessary.