Electronic Communication

Policy

Patients are able to obtain advice or information related to their care or appointment reminders by electronic means, where the doctor determines that a face-to-face consultation is unnecessary. Electronic communication includes: email on rare occasions and with Comms Consent which involves either written (included on new patient form and with the verification code provided to the patient at the time of consent**), telephone calls remain the most common use of communication with patients.**

This practice ***does utilise email to communicate with patients on a consent only (not for appointment information)***. Communications are via fax or telephone. All communications with patients is documented in the patient health record.

Patients are advised through the Practice Information Sheet (PIS) of the practice policy on electronic communications including:

- Seeking permission or consent from patients via Comms Consent on Best practice
- The possibility for electronic communications and information to be compromised
- Notification of any costs involved

When an email message is sent or received in the course of a person's duties, that message is a business communication and therefore constitutes an official record.

Employees should be aware that electronic communications could, depending on the technology, be forwarded, intercepted, printed and stored by others. Electronic mail is the equivalent of a post card. In regards to this, health information given in electronic communications should be limited and discussed in more general terms. Patients should be advised that information may be compromised.

Wherever possible, the practice should ensure secure encryption of emails is taking place.

The practice uses an email disclaimer notice on outgoing emails that are affiliated with the practice. *The following disclaimer is used on all emails sent from this practice:*

The information contained in this e-mail is confidential. It may also be legally privileged. If you are not the addressee you may not copy, forward, disclose or use any part of it. If you have received this message in error, please delete it and all copies from your system and notify the sender immediately by return e-mail. E-mail communications cannot be guaranteed to be timely, secure, error or virus-free. The sender does not accept liability for any errors or omissions which arise as a result.