

## Email Policy

Email is one of the more prevalent and convenient forms of communication. At Ranford Medical Centre, we regularly receive requests from patients, other clinicians and third parties to send health information via email and understand the need to ensure that all communication of health information is conducted with appropriate regard to the privacy and confidentiality of the patient.

All forms of written communication involve an element of risk that information could be read by someone other than the intended recipient. All GPs, health providers, support staff and patients should be aware of the risks associated with using email in the health care environment.

- Emails can easily be sent to the wrong recipient
- Email is often accessed on portable devices such as smart phones, tablets and laptops which are easily lost or stolen
- Emails can be forwarded or changed without the knowledge or consent of the original sender
- Email is vulnerable to interception

Wherever possible, patient information is sent via secure programs such as Health Link. This is not possible when dealing with patients and our practice takes reasonable steps to ensure our communication of health information is adequately safe and secure.

- Computer security measures.
- Using 3 identifiers to identify patients
- Email address is confirmed and documented in patient record
- Notifying patients that there is a security risk in sending emails to them containing their personal medical information. They can choose to collect a hard copy from our office if they prefer. Consent to receive information by email is noted in their clinical record each time.
- Encryption of emails containing patient information
- Health information that can only be sent using unencrypted email holds an increased risk and patients are notified, with consent recorded in patient file.
- Notification to OAIC of any significant data breach

The practice uses an email disclaimer notice on outgoing emails that are affiliated with the practice stating **This message is confidential and should only be used by the intended addressee. If you were sent this email by mistake, please inform us by reply email and then destroy this message.**

We do not send results via email. After your results have been discussed with your doctor, a copy can be collected from reception.

### Receiving email

When essential, patients are able to send emails to the practice using [rec3@ranmed.com.au](mailto:rec3@ranmed.com.au) These emails are accessed by reception using the records computer.

- The content of the message is copied and sent as a task through Genie linked to the patient file, to the intended recipient.
- The email is printed and a hard copy is placed in the doctors mail bag for action.
- If reception are aware that the email is unable to be actioned within 24 hours, the patient is advised of the progress of their enquiry
- Patients are encouraged to call reception if they would like to follow up their email

We do not accept requests for repeat referrals or scripts by email. Patients are to contact reception 9456 0800 with their request and 24 hours notice is required. Best medical practice may require the patient to be seen by their doctor before we can meet the request.

We do not send results via email. After your results have been discussed with your doctor, a copy can be collected from reception.

Patients should not use email communication in an emergency. Contact reception on 9456 0800 or in a life threatening situation, call 000.