



## **PRACTICE PRIVACY POLICY**

Histolab takes your privacy seriously. Privacy protection and confidentiality of health information is essential for quality health care and we are committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the information we handle about you.

This policy explains:

- how we collect, store, use and disclose your personal information;
- how you may access your personal information;
- how we protect the quality and security of your personal information;
- how you may seek correction of any personal information we hold;
- how you may make a complaint about our handling of your personal information.

In addition to our professional and ethical obligations, at a minimum, Histolab handles your personal information in accordance with federal and state privacy law. This includes complying with the federal Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) forming part of the Privacy Act 1998 (Cth) and the Victorian Health Privacy Principles (HPPs) forming part of the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic). Any exemptions to these privacy principles are as stated in the Privacy Act 1998 (Cth) and Health Records Act 2001 Part 2 Division 3 Exemptions.

More information about the APPs and HPPs can be found on the Australian Information Commissioner's website [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au) or in hard copy on request from our Practice Manager.

### **Collection of information**

Histolab collects and holds personal information about you so that we may properly assess, diagnose, treat and be proactive in your health care needs.

The type of personal information we collect may include:

- identity details  
name, address, telephone number, email address, gender, date of birth, individual healthcare identifiers.
- information to assist billing and administration  
medicare number, health fund policy number and insurance cover details, workers compensation or other insurance claim details, concession card details, credit card number or other account information for billing purposes.
- medical  
your referring doctor details and their clinical notes, details of other medical professionals involved in your care, pathology tests requested as set out in the referral, pathology test results and notes prepared by clinicians and other third parties such as radiologists, previous medical history and disease status.

Personal information about you is collected from information that is recorded on the pathology request form your doctor provides to us with your specimen when recommending that you obtain pathology services from us, or from someone who has responsibility for your care such as your parent, carer or guardian and you directly.

In some instances information about you is provided from other sources such as referring radiology practices, hospitals, day procedure centres or other health care providers.

### **Use and disclosure**

Your personal information will only be used or disclosed for purposes directly related to providing you with quality health care, or in ways you would reasonably expect us to use it in order to provide you with this service.

This includes use or disclosure:



- to the professional team directly involved in your health care, including treating doctors, pathology services, radiology services and other specialists outside this medical practice. For example, this may occur through referral to other doctors when requesting medical tests or in the report or result returned to us following the referrals;
- to Histolab administrative staff for billing and other administrative tasks necessary to run our practice. Our staff are trained in the handling of personal information in accordance with the *Practice Privacy Policy*;
- to your health insurance fund, Medicare or other organisations responsible for the financial aspects of your care;
- where required by law, for example, pursuant to a subpoena;
- to insurers or lawyers for the defence of a medical claim;
- to assist with training and education of other health care professionals only where that information has been de-identified for use for these purposes;
- government and regulatory authorities and other organisations, as required or authorised by law, such as reporting test results to registries.

Histolab does not intend to disclose your personal information to overseas recipients.

#### **Information Quality**

We aim to ensure the information we hold about you is accurate, complete, up to date and relevant. Please let us know if any of the information we hold about you is incorrect or not up to date.

#### **Storage**

Histolab takes all reasonable steps to protect the security of the personal information we hold, by:

- securing our premises;
- requiring our staff to be aware of patient confidentiality at all times ;
- using passwords on all electronic systems and databases and varying access levels to protect electronic information from unauthorised interference, access, modification or disclosure;
- storing hard copy records in secure filing cabinets or rooms that are accessible only to Histolab staff.

#### **Access to your personal information**

Under law you have a right to access personal information we hold about you. Please contact our Practice Manager for more information on our *Access to Medical Records Policy*.

We ask that you put your request in writing. A fee for the retrieval and copying of your medical record will apply, charged in accordance with the schedule of fees specified in the Health Records Regulations 2008 (Vic), plus GST. This fee is not redeemable through Medicare or private health insurance.

#### **Amendment of your personal information**

If you consider the information we hold about you is not correct, please contact the Practice in writing. You have the right to have any incorrect information corrected.

#### **What happens if you choose to withhold your personal information?**

You are not obliged to give us your personal information. However, if you choose not to provide the Practice with the personal details requested, it may limit our ability to provide you with full service. We encourage you to discuss your concerns with our reception staff or with your doctor.

#### **What about use of personal information for direct marketing?**

Australian privacy law limits the use of personal information for direct marketing of goods and services. We do not use your personal information for direct marketing.



**What should I do if I have a privacy complaint?**

If you have a complaint regarding the way your personal information has been handled by Histolab, please put it in writing and address it to:

Practice Manager  
Histolab Pty Ltd  
PO Box 425 Kew East LPO  
Kew VIC 3102

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 14 days, and endeavour to provide a full response within 30 days of receipt.

Should you be dissatisfied with our response, you may lodge your written complaint with the Victorian Privacy Commissioner at <https://www.privacy.vic.gov.au> and/or the Victorian Health Services Commissioner at <http://www.health.vic.gov.au>.

If you have any queries regarding Histolab's privacy policy, you can contact our Practice Manager in the following ways:

Email                [info@histolab.com.au](mailto:info@histolab.com.au)

Telephone            (03) 9852 8622

Post                    Practice Manager  
                          Histolab Pty Ltd  
                          PO Box 425 Kew East LPO  
                          Kew VIC 3102



## **ACCESS TO MEDICAL RECORDS POLICY**

Under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic), you have a legal right to access the personal information Histolab holds about you (such as your medical record), subject to some exceptions.

### **Access Fees**

Histolab is entitled to charge an appropriate fee, determined in accordance with the Health Records Regulations 2002 (Vic), plus GST, to cover the administrative costs of this service. Our reception will advise you of the applicable fee, which is not redeemable under Medicare or private health insurance.

### **How do I request Access to my Personal Information?**

Patients who wish to access or obtain a copy of their personal information should put their request in writing using the *Request to Access Medical Records Form*, which can be obtained by contacting our reception staff.

All requests will be acknowledged in writing within 14 days of receipt of the request.

Ordinarily, access to the requested information will be provided within 30 days.

### **How will Access be Provided?**

The preferred way to get your medical record is in consultation with your doctor, so the doctor can assist you to understand and interpret the material contained within it. We recommend that you make an appointment with your doctor to view your medical record together.

Access may be provided by providing you with a copy of the requested medical record in the manner requested by you, if it is reasonable and practicable to do so.

### **Can I Amend my Medical Record?**

If you consider the information we hold about you is not correct, please contact Histolab in writing, using the *Request to Amend Medical Record Form* available from our reception staff. You have the right to have any incorrect information corrected.

### **When will Access to My Medical Record be Refused?**

Access to your personal information may be legitimately withheld in certain situations, including (among others):

- where access would pose a serious threat to the life, health or safety of any individual or the public;
- where access would cause unreasonable impact on the privacy of other individuals;
- where the request is frivolous or vexatious; or
- where the information is privileged as a result of actual or anticipated legal proceedings.

If access to your personal information is refused, Histolab will provide you with written reasons for the refusal. You will not be charged an access fee in this instance.

If you have any queries regarding the above policy, you can contact our Practice Manager in the following ways:

Email	info@histolab.com.au
Telephone	(03) 9852 8622
Post	Practice Manager Histolab Pty Ltd PO Box 425 Kew East LPO Kew VIC 3102