



## Communication Policy

Wollongong Campus Medical Centre communicates with patients and third parties through the following methods:

### Face to Face

This includes consultations with your doctor or nurse, as well as interactions with other members of the practice team and other health professionals.

### Telephone

Patients can reach the practice by phone from 8:00am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday. Outside of these hours, our phone system plays a recorded message with alternative phone numbers should you need to seek medical assistance. In an emergency call 000.

Reception staff may use a triage system to prioritise patient needs and concerns based on urgency. They will also conduct a three-point identity check to ensure the correct patient record is accessed – this assures the highest level of privacy and confidentiality.

Telehealth appointments can be arranged if you meet the criteria set by Medicare.

During consulting hours, doctors are focused on patient appointments, so interruptions are minimised as a courtesy. Reception can take any queries and securely message the doctor or raise it between consultations.

Any discussions involving clinically relevant information will be documented in the patient's file.

### Telehealth (Video)

Regular patients of the practice can book appointments via video through HotDoc. A secure link will be sent to your nominated email address.

### Fax

Incoming faxes containing patient information are uploaded directly to the patient's file, then reviewed and actioned by the doctor.

All outgoing faxes are fronted with a confidential cover sheet and are carefully checked to ensure they are sent to the intended recipient.

### Email

As email is not a secure method of communication, we do not use it to send personal medical information to patients without their consent. Communication via email is done at the patient's own risk. For privacy and confidentiality, please do not send clinical queries via email. Patients should be aware that any email sent to the practice is not secure and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Emails sent from the practice are password protected. The recipient will need the password to access the contents.

By choosing to contact the practice via email, patients provide implied consent for staff to respond using the same method. We aim to reply to emails within 24 hours. For urgent matters, we strongly recommend contacting us by phone, and in an emergency, call 000.

The following cannot be done via email; book or cancel appointments, please call reception on 4216 5590 to arrange this. If you have booked online, you can cancel or change your appointments by using the HotDoc app.

### SMS

SMS messages are used, via HotDoc, to remind patients of appointments, recalls (for results), and



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provide reminders. Please notify the practice if your mobile number changes. If you wish to opt out of SMS communication, you may opt out through your HotDoc account, or let reception staff know and they can amend your settings as required. Please be advised that if someone else has access to your mobile device, the confidentiality of SMS messages cannot be guaranteed.

### Mail

Patients who have opted out of SMS reminders may receive letters regarding recalls or reminders. Letters received by the practice from specialists, allied health or other health professionals are scanned into the patient's file and sent to the doctor for review.

### Website

Our webpages are maintained regularly to ensure that all information listed within them is current and accurate, and that all links and pages are working as designed. Information is updated whenever there is a change in the practice, such as a new practitioner joining the team, changes to opening hours or services offered, or any other important information that may affect our patients. It also provides online booking options and details about our after-hours doctor service.

### Online Booking (HotDoc)

Patients can book, amend, and cancel appointments through the online booking portal HotDoc. Patients can choose their preferred practitioner and preferred time.

### Secure Messaging Services

To send and receive clinical information, our practice uses secure messaging services with a directory of local specialists, allied health providers, community and social services, and is available through our software. Prescriptions and pathology referrals can also be sent electronically through secure systems.

Correspondence sent and received electronically is encrypted and authenticated, and monitored by our IT provider.

### Communicating with Patients with Special Needs

A list of translator, interpreter, and disability support services is kept up to date and is easily accessible to all reception staff. These services include:

- National Relay Service - 1300 555 727
- Auslan services – 1300 287 526
- Translation and Interpreter Service (TIS) Doctors Priority Line - 1300 131 45

### Requests for Results, Prescriptions, Medical Certificates and Paperwork

For all scripts, results, medical certificates, reports and other document requests, an appointment will be required. To discuss your health concerns, please book an appointment with a doctor or nurse.