Current as of: October 2023

Communication Policy

Our Practice may contact you via telephone calls, text messages and/or email to confirm or notify you of any changes to your scheduled appointment, recalls requiring urgent attention and health promotion reminders (optional).

All results are reviewed by a doctor and appropriate communication is at the doctor's discretion. We ask that you make a follow-up appointment to receive results, either face to face or via telehealth. Depending on the circumstance you may receive telephone calls, text messages and/or email from the doctor or the practice nurse.

Face To Face

This can be via consultation with your doctor or nurse or interactions with other practice staff.

Telephone

Patients can contact the practice via telephone between 8am and 5pm Monday to Friday and between 9am to 12pm on Saturdays. Outside of those times, we have an automatic recorded message on our telephone system. We do not have a voicemail system.

Our reception staff may use a triage system to assess the urgency of the patients' needs and concerns and convey your concerns to nursing staff. Our reception staff will also perform a three-point identity check to ensure the correct patient file is matched to the patient on the phone.

Doctors are unavailable by phone unless you have booked a telehealth appointment or in the event of an emergency. Our doctors are consulting during surgery hours and interruptions are kept to a minimum as a courtesy to other patients. You may leave a query with reception who will send the doctor a secure message or ask the doctor between patients if available.

Where clinically significant information is discussed, a note will be entered in the patient's file.

Our practice nurses may be able to assist with a general question regarding your healthcare. If you have a medical question after seeing one of our doctors, you can speak with a practice nurse and they will discuss your concerns with the doctor. Normally a nurse will return your call later the same day.

For any urgent medical problems, we recommend you attend your nearest hospital, or alternatively please call our practice and depending on the urgency and availability, a nurse will organise an urgent appointment with one of our doctors.

SMS

SMS messages are sent to remind patients of scheduled appointments, health reminders and health recalls (optional). Please make sure you update the practice if there is a change to your mobile number. Patients must be aware that if another person can access their mobile phone, then the confidentiality of these communications cannot be protected by the practice.

Prescriptions (eScripts) and some results may be sent via an SMS message directly via secure messaging from a doctor.

Email

Email is not a secure form of communication and we do not use this to communicate personal information to patients without their consent. Patients must be aware that any communication they direct to the surgery via email is also NOT secure and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Patients communicating through email do so at their own risk.

If you do choose to contact the surgery via email, this is considered as patient consent for our staff to reply via email. Our staff endeavour to respond to email messages within 48 hours. If you have an issue that requires urgent attention, we request that you contact the practice via telephone.

Fax

Incoming faxes received by the practice are scanned into the patient file for the doctor to review. Any urgent patient related faxes are immediately handed to the doctor or if that doctor is not available another doctor in the practice will review the fax.

All outgoing faxes are double-checked before being sent to confirm they are being sent to the correct recipient.

Post

For patients who have opted out of SMS, a letter may be sent regarding reminders or recalls. Letters received by the practice are scanned into the patient file for the doctor to review.

Website

Our website is updated regularly and contains the practice contact details, location, opening hours and information regarding doctors, practice fees and services offered. Our online booking, repeat scripts and referrals and after-hours doctor service details are also available.

Communicating With Patients with Special Needs

A contact list of translator and interpreter services and services for patients with a disability is readily available to all staff at reception. These include:

- National Relay Service (NRS)
- National Interpreter Booking Service (NABS)
- Auslan services 1300 AUSLAN
- Translation and Interpreter Service (TIS) Doctors Priority Line 1300 131 450

Discussing Medical Information

The practice manager and reception staff members are not qualified to provide medical advice and are not able to discuss any medical information over phone, email, or any other communication channel. If you wish to discuss your health, you will need to make an appointment with a doctor.

Feedback

We are always trying to improve our service and are happy to address any written complaints from our patients. Should you have any feedback regarding your care, please send an email to practicemanager@fountaingp.com.au

Policy review statement

This privacy policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur.